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EVA ABIGAIL SMITH

A CHILD OF THE NEBRASKA FRONTIER





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EVA ABIGAIL IN ST. LOUIS — 1929

Eva Abigail Smith^c

A Child of the Nebraska Frontier

By Her Husband

SETH HERBERT BUELL

O my Luve's like a red, red rose

That's newly sprung in June:

O my Luve's like the melodie

That's sweetly play'd in tune.

— Robert Burns

1473613

Rev. Seth H. Buell, pastor of the
Compton Hill Congregational Church
at St. Louis, Mo. Died Friday, Jan. 1,
1943. at his home in St. Louis.

5.00. P.O. # 6074-11-22-68. Handwritten ✓

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Foreword

A name in stone is an inadequate reminder of the experiences we have shared with those whom we have loved "and lost awhile." This is an effort to extend some of those memories in a form more suggestive of their vital force and color. Among these commonplaces one may feel the urge of something just beyond, something more to be attained, tho not quite expressed.

Since these events are a part of the romantic development of the Middle West in the last century, they are doubly rich in inspiration. Stories of the pioneers may well be cherished by their children, for only as their lofty enterprise is better understood is it possible to appreciate the heritage which they gave. In Eva Abigail were united three generations that had spanned the country from Maine in New England, thru New York, thru Ohio, thru Indiana, thru Iowa to Nebraska. Their children have reached the Pacific. These sketches of Eva Abigail are intended first for her own kin, then for those who knew her, and finally for all who may admire a fine and dauntless spirit.

In compiling this material every means at hand has been used to verify the data, but many points are obscure and uncertain as to detail. The facts of our lives so quickly disappear. "They fly forgotten, as a dream dies at the opening day."

I acknowledge with deep thankfulness the debt I owe to Eva's sister, Mrs. Mary S. Smith, and to her husband Mr. Herbert G. Smith, who have collaborated generously and ably in contributing and gathering information for the first chapters. Mary is the speaker in much of the narrative, even beyond the limits of her own story.

July, 1941.

S. H. B.



THE PIONEERS: MR. AND MRS. ERASTUS SMITH — 1897
EVA, 1901; MARY, 1922; AND LAURA, ABOUT 1900

PART I

Ancestry

Jonas Smith, the grandfather of Eva, Mary and Laura, introduces the family tradition. He was born a farm boy near Bennington, Vermont, on April 13, 1799. Pittsford is the place named in the Mormon record of his wife's brother Elijah. There is a scrap of penmanship copy such as was set for school children in those days — *Studiously improve — Sudden resolutions bring leisurely repentance* — that bears the signature: "Jonas Smith, Troy, New York, February 3, 1815."

He went on to Buffalo, and down the Ohio River by flatboat to Cincinnati. He worked as a farm hand for one hundred dollars a year. After 1818 when the state was cleared of Indians for settlement (probably about 1821), he came with John Hendricks, a surveyor, to Shelbyville, Indiana. He located and cleared land for his farm on the east half of the northwest quarter of Section Ten, Township Twelve, Range Seven. This is one mile south and two miles east of the center of town. His patent was issued by President James Madison and bears date June 1, 1824.

History shows that five families were leaders in the founding of Shelbyville: Hendricks, Mayhew, Walker, Davison and Huntington. John Hendricks was the father of Thomas A. Hendricks, who became governor of the state and, later, vice president with Grover Cleveland. Young Jonas Smith, who "came with John Hendricks, a Surveyor," soon allied himself with another leading family. The August after he proved up on his farm he married Abigail Mayhew. Of their twelve children, ten grew to maturity and contributed a generous share to the pioneer settlement of the West. They

were Zerelda, Elisha, Erastus, Olivia, George, Laura, Sarah, Hiram, Harriet and Ann. Erastus was the father of Eva, Laura and Mary.

Dim tradition says that sandy, red-haired Jonas Smith was reticent about his people, somewhat eccentric and severe, and a Methodist. At least that was his wife's church. He died on December 9, 1851, at the age of fifty-two, and was buried with the Mayhew family in Shelbyville, where his stone may be found today.

Abigail Mayhew, the grandmother of Eva, brings a touch of color and idealism into the picture. She was born in Maine February 10, 1801, the daughter of Elisha Mayhew and Abigail Tibbitts, who were married in Penobscot County, Jackson Township, on June 18, 1792. It is said that the Mayhews lived across the river from Bangor during the Revolutionary War. Elisha Mayhew and his family left Levant, Maine, on September 18, 1818, for Cincinnati, where they arrived January 1, 1819. According to an old letter, the oldest of the nine children, Lauranna, was left in Maine as the wife of Jacob Mann.

Elisha Mayhew built one of the first houses in Shelbyville, and with his four sons was one of the founders of the town. In 1825 he and his wife and daughters Abigail and Sarah, with three others, organized the First Methodist Church in Shelbyville. The Hendricks were Presbyterians. The First Presbyterian Church was organized in 1829, and the Reverend Eliphalet Kent was sent from New England by the American Home Missionary Society of New York to become the pastor.

After the death of her husband, Jonas, Abigail Mayhew Smith moved to Iowa, where her grown sons had already taken land. She died November 18, 1868. Her grave is in Des Moines. Grandson Herbert G. Smith has the deed to the lot.

Tradition connects the line with the Mayhews of Martha's Vineyard; with governors, clergymen, missionaries; but the record of descent is not complete. Abigail's brother, Royal

Mayhew, while State Treasurer of Indiana in 1844-47, gave important leadership in establishment of the public school system of the state.

It would appear that Eva inherited the Mayhew frame — small bones, good height, black hair, high forehead, and receding hair-line.

Erastus Smith, the father of Eva, was born August 3, 1830, on the farm near Shelbyville. He received such education as the common schools afforded, and went to the seminary in Shelbyville where he studied civil engineering. Mrs. Kent, the wife of the Presbyterian minister, was a teacher in that seminary, and many young men who achieved success in the growing country traced their inspiration to her.

In 1851 Erastus received a letter urging him to leave school to accept a position as rodman in railroad construction work out of Lawrenceburg, Indiana. The terms were \$1.25 per day for time employed, and board himself. During this period he copyrighted a device for drafting which was found among the effects in "the old trunk," repository of the family treasures. Under date September 20, 1855, he received the following recommendation:

The Bearer, Mr. E. Smith, has been engaged for some four years in the business of Civil Engineering, three years of which time he has been in my employ. Being well acquainted with Mr. Smith, and knowing his qualifications as an Assistant Engineer, I take pleasure in recommending him to any Rail Road Company who may need his services.

His personal character is unimpeachable.

J. H. Sprague.

In those days he married Clara F. True, evidently a Cincinnati girl whom he met while visiting mutual friends. They went to Chicago, where he worked for a time in a planing mill. He told of hunting all over the muddy town for a peck of potatoes. His wife died within the year. Altho Mr. Smith did not often speak of this first marriage, when in 1883 a baby girl was born he took her in his arms and said to his wife, "Let's call her Clara." When "the old trunk" which had been

thru all the pioneer experiences, too sacred for the children to touch, was opened after his death, there among other treasures were found Clara's diary, notes of her seminary days, essays, debates, an autograph album, and many things which reveal a rare spirit and a delightful romance.

That autograph album of 1852 was a respectable volume. Neither young men nor women in those days in southern Ohio or Indiana seemed at a loss to fill a page with reflection, counsel or poetry. There was an eye for beauty, there were delicate touches of reverent affection, and flashes of Victorian gallantry.

"He who seeks the truth, and trembles
At the dangers he must brave,
Is not fit to be a free man.
He at heart is but a slave."

— Ralph.

Now twenty-five years old, he secured four hundred acres of land in Iowa where his brothers were already established; but within two years he sold and went to Omaha, which was then booming in anticipation of a railroad. In "the old trunk" were found deeds to lots in Omaha dated September 8, 1856. He surveyed extensively west of Omaha, and used his pre-emption rights on land near Fremont. In the winter of 1856-1857 his party was caught in a blizzard and his feet were frozen so badly that he had to go to Des Moines for an operation which amputated two toes of the left foot. Then, with the collapse of the land boom, he lost what he had acquired thru the failure of a friend for whom he had given security.

When the war broke out in 1861 he was in Burning Springs, West Virginia, traveling in the interest of oil wells. Since business was at a standstill he returned to Polk County, Iowa, and taught school. Presently he married one of his pupils, Mary Jane Person, whose people were thrifty farmers, and for ten years he farmed in Iowa.

Erastus Smith was an unusual man for a pioneer farmer. He was six feet tall, straight as an Indian, with a high forehead and jet black hair which became gray with age. He had a keen, active mind which resented trivialities. Tho always a frontiers-

man, he scorned to own or carry a gun. In Ravenna in later years he habitually wore a broad-brimmed hat and Prince Albert coat. He refused to carry a cane, even in age. As a young man he joined the Methodist Church, tho in mature years he inclined to critical scientific and liberal thought. His morals were of the strictest Puritan pattern. He joined the Masonic Lodge in Shelbyville and was influential in establishing a lodge in Ravenna. In politics he was a staunch Republican. When in Nebraska in 1856 he made notes on the weather. From the time he located on Beaver Creek in 1874 he kept a complete record, serving as a "volunteer observer" for the Government from 1878 to his death in 1909. That record was continued by his family until 1921 — a record for forty-four years. He was a man of wide information, who read much and observed carefully. Often he would say, "I wish that I might live twenty years longer, just to see what will happen." That was before the Great War. He was vigorous and pronounced in his opinions, and in bearing an aristocrat.

Mary Dudley, the maternal grandmother of Eva, brings another dash of color and humanism into the family tradition. The line is complete from Governor Thomas Dudley of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, as shown in "The Story of the Dudley Family" by Dean Dudley in the Public Library of New York City. Like the Mayhews, the Dudleys came from Maine.

Great-Grandfather Daniel Dudley married Jane Campbell. There were twelve children, of whom he used to say that they were "all boys but ten." Grandmother Mary Dudley was the sixth; born June 16, 1815. Tradition says the ancestral home was at Augusta, but seven of the children were born at Charleston, north of Augusta. The family migrated to Meigs County in southeast Ohio in 1817. Great-Grandfather Dudley was a shoemaker and a minister — probably of the Baptist churches.

There is a story that Mary once perched herself on a fence within her father's hearing and sang persistently over

and over, "Mamma will let me go to school if Papa will!" At last her father took notice and said, "Mary, you know that I do not mind about your going to school, but I have no money for your shoes." To which Mary answered: "I can make the tops of cloth, if you will put soles on them." Her father agreed, and Mary went to school; but how long, what kind of school, or where, the story does not tell.

Mary Dudley married Aaron Barney Person on November 17, 1836, in Ohio. Following 1847 the Person and Dudley families made migrations into Iowa. Charles Dudley, the brother of Mary, moved to Wapello County in 1850 ~~and to Polk County in~~ 1856. Another brother, Edward, who was a minister of the Free Baptist churches, died at Agency in 1890. A son of his was a professor in Hillsdale College in Michigan. Great-Grandmother Jane Campbell Dudley did not die until after the Smiths came to Nebraska. Her grave is near Agency. Mary Smith remembers her mother getting the news.

Mary Jane Person, the mother of Eva, the youngest of the four children of Aaron B. Person and Mary Dudley, was born in Ohio February 17, 1848. She was a baby when her parents moved to Iowa. She remembered waking from a nap and starting out to find her mother, who discovered her stuck fast in the muddy road, crying.

Conditions of life were hard in those days. At twelve Mary Jane was doing a woman's work. At sixteen she was married. At twenty-six, with three small children (leaving one dead in Iowa), she and Erastus set out once more for the extreme frontier. There was but one visit home in twelve years, tho three brothers came to visit her. There were two visits home after Ravenna began to grow. She knew the fear of Indians, and such loneliness that she walked miles just to see another woman. She shared her husband's work on the ranch, and bore two children in the soddy without medical assistance, once herself directing the unskilled neighbor who came to help.

She was a stout, jovial person who loved a joke and loved to play with the children, tho they were straightway suppressed by her husband who abhorred foolishness. She was a tireless worker, full of native initiative and resources. Usually a meek and obedient wife, yet at times when her husband became too self-assertive she would look him in the eye and say, "Now, Erastus . . ." And Erastus said no more.

Her father and mother were religious people who belonged to the Christian Church. She was baptized in that faith on her visit home. She was one of the first and most faithful members of the Congregational Church in Ravenna. Tho not facile in speech, she was willing and careful. If she expected to be called upon in a public service, her prayers were written and rehearsed. When conditions permitted she maintained the practice of saying grace at the family table, tho her husband did not share the responsibility. On the day that she was stricken she had been with the family at the noon meal; at supper she was gone. When they met at the table her husband looked around at the family; then, bowing his head, reverently asked God's blessing. To the day of his death the blessing was always asked at his table without question.

PART II

The Pioneers

(This is Mary's Story, and was published in part in the Fiftieth Anniversary Edition of the *Ravenna News*, October 16, 1936.)

When Father was forty-four years old, the desire for more land and larger herds lured him again beyond the Missouri River. We were subject to ague in Iowa, and our land was liable to overflow. Then, too, the Union Pacific and Burlington railroad companies were advertising Nebraska land in most alluring terms. Here, they declared, the cattle could be turned out all winter and live and grow fat on the wonderful buffalo grass that covered the plains.

Our Iowa home was a farm of two hundred and sixteen acres of rich bottom land along the Des Moines River, twelve miles southeast of the city. It produced tall corn which yielded sixty bushels to the acre. There was a good apple orchard and a vineyard. Strawberries, raspberries and blackberries were abundant. In the garden were all kinds of vegetables. The beehives were filled with delicious honey. Sheep grazed in the pastures of rich blue-grass. The many hogs were a source of home-cured hams and bacon, and furnished fat porkers for market. There were good horses, and fine cattle which were my father's pride. My mother's father, Aaron B. Person, specialized in shorthorn cattle and for years had won first premiums at the Iowa State Fair.

The place was well provided with good barns, corn cribs, granaries, and well fenced hog lots. There was a mill where, thru the winter, commercial sawing was done. There was an abundance of timber, and we gathered hazelnuts, hickory nuts, butternuts and black walnuts by the bushel.

The large two-story house was painted white with green blinds. It had six rooms, four fireplaces, two large square halls, and two porches, one above the other. It had been built of walnut lumber sawed from logs cleared from the place by my grandfather.

In the house were a spinning wheel and a hand loom. Grandmother was an expert weaver, and she wove as a means of living. We still have some of her blankets. Mother had been taught to spin and weave for family use. Sister Laura and I wore homespun dresses and petticoats for several years after coming to Nebraska.

In March, 1874, Father left his fertile land and comfortable home and went to Kearney, where someone (probably a land agent of the Union Pacific) drove him twenty-eight miles north until they came to a place where Beaver Creek flows into the South Loup River. Here Father located his homestead and a timber claim, and bought five hundred and twenty acres of Union Pacific land at \$4 per acre. He returned home to tell Mother that in a few weeks they must move to this new country, so recently the land of the Pawnee and the Sioux. It was hard for Mother to leave her people and her friends, but she rose to the adventure as other pioneer women have done.

Father shipped from Des Moines two carloads of grain, farm machinery and household goods, and six head of horses. With them as caretaker he had William Estridge, a friend of the family who expected to locate in Nebraska. Father, Mother and the children (Laura eight years old, Mary six, and Charles four) came by train to Kearney. There we spent the night at a hotel.

Father had rented a cottage in which we expected to live until the house on the homestead was ready. But when it collapsed under the weight of our goods, Father hired a team and we drove to Sweetwater, where we put up with a family that lived in a dugout. There were two rooms, and four of them and five of us made things pretty thick. We did not want to stay there longer than was necessary.

The next day Father and Mother went to look at their new land. The driver, thinking to discourage them, drove over the sand ridges which, along the river, had spread over the rich loess soil. Father had first seen it with much snow on the ground. Mother said that she had never been so discouraged in her life.

The day after we left Kearney Will Estridge and Frank Smith came on with the teams. They got a late start, and the roads were bad. It was long after dark when they reached Sweetwater. A heavy rain that afternoon had washed out the bridge and the stream was bank-full. Before they could be warned the young team had been driven down the slippery bank into the rushing water. Estridge freed himself, but the horses tangled with the young mare tied alongside and were swept down stream. It was very dark and Father had only an old lantern as he saw his three best horses borne away.

The next day was spent in getting what we could from the stream. The cook stove and furniture were salvaged, but a barrel of meats and other provisions were lost. I vividly recall seeing Mother in tears as she and Father unfolded keepsakes and valuable papers from the trunks. Papers taken from "the old trunk" in 1933 still had some of the creek mud on them. We lived in the dugout until a new bridge was built. Logs were put across from bank to bank, poles and brush placed upon them, then hay, and all covered with dirt and sod. Such a bridge lasted until the next flood. This was an important bridge because it was on the road connecting Kearney with Loup City.

It was on May 10, 1874, that we went down the Beaver Creek valley to the homestead. We youngsters were seated in a lumber wagon on some hay. It was a great picnic for us who were too young to think of hardship, but to Mother there was not much that looked like home.

Two loads of lumber had been hauled from Kearney. The frame of the house was up. The rafters were in place, boards had been laid on the sleepers for the cookstove, and the

pipe had been put thru the roof. Mother had the sewing machine, a big knife, a skillet, and some tin plates, but no knives or forks. Frank Smith whittled paddles for us to eat with. We children sat on a board laid across the sleepers, and ate from the skillet. Our beds were made of ticks filled with grass. The house was built around us. It was of sods laid up around a frame — a luxury by comparison with most soddies. It was an almost endless task to get all the goods out from Kearney. The small ponies and rickety wagons of the pioneers could haul only small loads. The better horses were kept for breaking the sod.

Before we were really settled Laura was playing with a box fixed up just north of the house, and she came running:

“O Mother, a snake blew at me just like a goose!”

Mother could not find the snake, so she called Estridge, who was plowing with “Jack” and “Doc.” It was necessary to get the crops in at once if we expected a harvest the first year. He found the snake under the boards of the kitchen floor, and killed it with his revolver. An old trapper who came in slipped a bow of black ribbon around its neck, saying, “That’s the way they come dressed up in Nebraska.” It had eight rattles. Years afterward Mother heard the turkeys’ “Quick! Quick!” and went to the door where baby Eva had just crawled. There by the steps she found a rattler and killed it with a club kept for such emergencies. Once a rattlesnake crawled under the bureau and we had a great time getting it out. There was a prairie-dog town just north of the house, and rattlers are often found near them. Mother never went to the field without being prepared to meet a snake.

At first water for the house was brought from the creek, but a well was bored during the summer by men from Kearney. It was sixty feet deep and gave us plenty of water, which was drawn with a long bucket and windlass. There was no windmill.

The well was from ten to twelve inches in diameter, with regular wooden curbing. One day when the bucket had been

left in the trough a kitten climbed up the curb and fell into the well. We children heard it meowing and were panic-stricken, but Mother always knew what to do. She tied a weight to a roller towel, removed the bucket, and lowered the towel by the windlass. The kitten clung to the towel and was pulled to safety, wet and bedraggled.

The cattle were driven to the Loup for water. In winter it was necessary to cut thru the ice so that they could drink.

Our soddie was about sixteen by thirty-two feet on the ground, as nearly as I can remember, and perhaps nine feet high in front, sloping to seven feet at the rear. Father, who was six feet tall, could stand erect at the back of the rooms. The board floor wore out under the sand that was tracked in, and had to be replaced in spots. The roof was made of two layers of boards with tar paper between. By climbing up at the back we used the roof for drying bushels of corn and wild plums, which were covered with mosquito netting to keep the flies away. As the roof grew old it was not safe to open the door when the wind blew a gale from the south, and at such times we came and went thru the north window back of the stove. In one blizzard (it might have been the hard winter of 1881) the snow drifted to the top of the roof so that we had to shovel our way out. There were two windows toward the south and two facing north. The door was at the south side and opened into the room that served as kitchen and living room, which occupied the west section. A curtained doorway connected with the bedroom which was in the east section. Our front door was paneled and had a knob and lock, which most soddies did not have.

Our house was furnished with substantial black walnut furniture which we had brought from Iowa. Many pieces have been refinished and are still in use as valued heirlooms.

The wash-stand was on the right by the door as one entered the main room. The good Mansard stove had a reservoir and a warming oven, which were luxuries in those days. There were two drop-leaf tables. One was used for work and the

other was the dining table, which was moved back against the wall when not in use. There was a tall "safe" for food and dishes, and a black-walnut case of choice books; a chest of drawers, and a double spindle bed. The Seth Thomas clock that they had bought when they were married in 1864 stood on top of the chest. It was still keeping good time in our home in Crete in 1940. Flour and supplies were stored in the corner back of the stove. Father's tools were kept in a chest under the bed, as were many other things. No space was wasted in those days.

In the east room there were two double beds placed foot to foot against the east wall. Clothes were hung between them as a screen. There was a lounge or day-bed, a bureau with its mirror, a drop-leaf stand, a desk-cabinet which was the "post-office," a Howe sewing machine, splint-bottom ladder-back chairs, trunks, and a heating stove. Strips of carpet were kept rolled away, but laid down before the beds for company.

The granary was built by a carpenter from Kearney in 1875, and it stood north and west of the soddy. It was of good lumber, with grooved siding and shingle roof. One side contained two bins for wheat; the other was a crib for corn. The sheller stood in the alley between. In open weather the men slept in the granary loft, or in the empty bins. Really, it was the best place!

The cave, that was our refuge from tornadoes, was built east of the house and north of the well. It was used also for storing fruit and vegetables.

When we came to Buffalo County there were settlers west and north of Sweetwater who had moved into the district the year before. There were none on the east nearer than the Kynes at St. Michael, ten miles away. On the south there was no one nearer than a man who lived under the bluffs of the Loup beyond Poole. Father used to say that there were just ten families between us and the Sioux.

Ten days before the Smiths came to McGee's at Sweetwater, a scout band of Sioux had called and Mrs. McGee made

mush for them in the big kettle which was used for outdoor cooking. They said that they were looking for a band of the Pawnee, but were coming back some day to clean out the white men. For three years Mother feared that raid with every sound at night. The Sioux had routed and massacred the Pawnee in a big battle near Trenton in 1873. But the Indians who came into the country later were friendly hunting bands of the Omaha Tribe.

In the open country beyond Litchfield, sixteen miles west, there were no settlers. Cattlemen from Texas used to drive their herds there. In 1878 cattle stealing gave rise to the famous case of Ketchum and Mitchell versus the Olive Brothers. Ketchum and Mitchell, settlers, were suspected of stealing cattle. I. P. Olive and his brother were Texas cattlemen who had been deputized, in defense of the Texas stock, to arrest Ketchum and Mitchell; but, instead of being arrested, their bodies were found: they had been shot, hanged and burned. There was a great trial at Minden to which Father was called as a witness, tho he knew of the case only by hearsay. Olive was convicted and sentenced to prison; but he secured an appeal, returned to Texas, and was there shot by parties unknown. Olive once visited our place. When she saw the men coming, Mother, who was a good rider herself, exclaimed, "There's a man who knows how to ride a horse!" They appeared to be perfect gentlemen. Young Lawrence Ketchum, an unmarried brother, often worked for us. He was a good worker, neat and silent, and a dead shot with a gun. He came and went by turns. When he was away, no one knew where he had gone.

The Smith ranch and farm was made up of the east half of Section 8 and 520 acres of Section 9, Township 12, Range 14 West of the 6th Principal Meridian. The land in Section 9 was purchased from the Union Pacific. This tract of 840 acres, lying on the table and slope north of and across the junction of the Beaver and the Loup, Father began to improve. Everything was laid out along straight lines true with the sections, after the habit of a surveyor's mind. Many days I have held the pole while Father set stakes.

Six horses came with the goods. A fine one sold in Kearney for \$300. Three were lost in the creek. "Jack" and "Doc" plowed, but were too old to be depended upon for the trip to Kearney.

Father brought the first blooded cattle into north Buffalo County. There were two registered Shorthorn bulls (Father called them Durhams) and a herd of high-grade cows. Thirty-five head were driven thru from Iowa, with a loss of only one heifer. They came the first of June, when the grass was up. The corral was ready for them under the sandhill a quarter-mile east of the house, near where a Ravenna grade school now stands. It was a long way to carry milk! Father had arranged for us to have two cows for milk before the herd arrived. During the twelve years before the town was built he had, on the average, one hundred and fifty head of graded Shorthorns.

During the first year we had a visitation of grasshoppers, going south. We planted ten bushels of potatoes that year and harvested only nine. The next summer they were seen going over for days, in a cloud so dense that it shadowed the sun, but they did not come down in our locality. We raised good crops that year — 1,500 bushels of corn and 300 bushels of potatoes; so many, in fact, that we gave them away. The 'hoppers came again in 1876, but after that they came no more.

The tree-claim (No. 13) was proved up on March 10, 1883. No one who has not had the experience will ever know what a task it was to get those trees started; nor can one who came to Ravenna in later years imagine how bare the situation would have been without them. When we came there were no trees except the large cottonwoods along the river. We protected them from the prairie fires that seemed always to be getting a start somewhere, and gradually the boxelders and other trees began to come in.

As I remember the conditions, Father was to plow ten acres each year for four years, then to plant ten acres each

year as soon as the sod was rotted enough to permit it, and so on until the forty acres were planted with trees ten feet apart each way. Father preferred the black walnut, and twice he sent to Iowa for seed. He buried the nuts in the ground to be cracked open by frost and then planted them with a shovel. Many a day I have spent dropping black walnuts. The first ten acres were planted in 1876. They came up well and were doing nicely when the grasshoppers came and ate the buds. The next year we replanted, and some grew and survived the drouth. They may still be found about Ravenna.

We had a hard time getting trees of any kind to plant. There were few to be bought. We planted acorns, and some grew. We planted hickory nuts too, but they did not amount to anything. Charles and I gathered boxelder and ash seed along the river and put them in bags. That was "play work" while herding. Father had a bed in which he started the seeds. We also pulled up sprouts of cottonwood twelve to eighteen inches high that grew along the sandbars, and piled them up for the men to take home.

During this time an orchard was planted north of the house, surrounded by a windbreak. No doubt the timber and orchard and other trees that Father planted did much to influence other citizens of Ravenna to plant trees and shrubbery, making it one of the most beautiful towns in the state.

Charles and I had a regular occupation — herding cattle. At first we herded on foot. Later, Father traded a cow and calf for Daisy, a white pony, which we kept until the town started. With dogs and lunch we would cross the Loup each morning and bring the herd home at night. On these long days many interesting things happened. A favorite sport was to kill rattlers which we had located with the dogs. Once the river came up because of a big storm up-stream and we had to swim back, holding onto the cows' tails. The cows showed much wisdom and skill in keeping their calves on the upper side of them so that they would not be swept away in the swiftly flowing stream.

Sometimes a neighbor's bull strayed into the herd in spite of all that Charles and I could do to keep the mongrel out. Then there was a bull fight worthy the name! It was one of the most exciting events on the prairie. All we could do was to hurry to a bluff and trust Tom Mitchell to rout the intruder, which he usually did in the course of an hour. "Tom Mitchell" was the registered bull brought from Iowa.

Charles and I had seen the men lassoing ponies for riding, so one day we tried it with a calf some months old. We got the rope on him all right, but he would not let us come close enough to get it off again. When we tried it the calf would bawl — "Ba-ah! Ba-ah!" and all the cattle would gather round to see what was the matter. The calf was still dragging the rope when we brought the cattle in at night. Father had to be told. He got hold of the rope, but the calf was too big for him. As he was dragged around the corral I had to laugh. It almost meant a spanking for me, tho I recall only one spanking in my life. By the time Father called help and choked the calf down, the joke had all worn off. This ended the lassoing of calves for Charles and me.

In the days before the buyers began to come thru, Father drove cattle to Grand Island. Then he spruced up, changed the blue shirt of the ranch for a starched white one, and became another person — no longer the farmer, but a man of the town at the hotel.

Mother came to herd with us on Sundays, or would go with one of us while the other stayed at home. Mother found the best places for us, and lookouts where we could watch the cattle with the least amount of running. A favorite place to herd was up Crooked Creek in a draw half a mile east of the Cochran place. When Mother was with us we clung to her so closely that the grass round about was all worn off. Those were hallowed spots to us lonely children on the prairie.

We had no Sunday School, but we did not grow up without the Bible stories. Mother was a wonderful story-teller. When she took her knitting (and she knitted all our socks and

mittens) she told us the stories all the way from Genesis to Revelation. She told us, too, all the stories of the old home in Iowa and the days back East.

Lacking a school, Laura, Charles and I learned from Father and Mother, who taught us when they could. In 1875 and 1876 several families with children settled near us and we had almost enough prospective pupils to form a school, but after the grasshopper raids they all moved away. For many years the Smith children were the only ones within a radius of nine square miles. The school-house in the district in which Father was assessed was eighteen miles south and a mile west of our home. We were grown when at last a school was established in Ravenna.

Sister Laura was a quiet girl who helped in the house. I do not know what Mother would have done without her, for we did not have much help at first and often Mother had to work with Father loading hay and doing other heavy work. One day Mother had been helping on the tree-claim, and as they came in late for supper she remembered that there was no bread in the house. But Laura, who was ten, had supper ready, with biscuit that she had made all by herself. Mother used to say that to her those were the best biscuit ever made.

One morning, with the wind in the northwest, Father went over to the creek to finish some fire-guards. He always kept the house, stacks, corrals and garden surrounded by fire-guards of plowed ground, tho it took much time and they were not always complete. Mother went over the hill to get the cattle on the bottom-land to the west—south of where the cemetery is now located. At that time they were not herded, but merely rounded up as needed. We children were left at home, as were the horses and wagons. Mother always told us to stay near the house when we were alone, and in case of fire to get into the wagon box and lie down—on our faces if necessary to escape the smoke.

The cattle were further away than expected that morning—two miles instead of one. There was much smoke in the

air, and when she was farthest from home the fire came over the hill from the north. But she had time to start a backfire with matches which she always carried, and to burn a wide space on which she gathered the cattle, uncertain what they would do. Fortunately they behaved well, milling around on the burned space instead of stampeding as she feared.

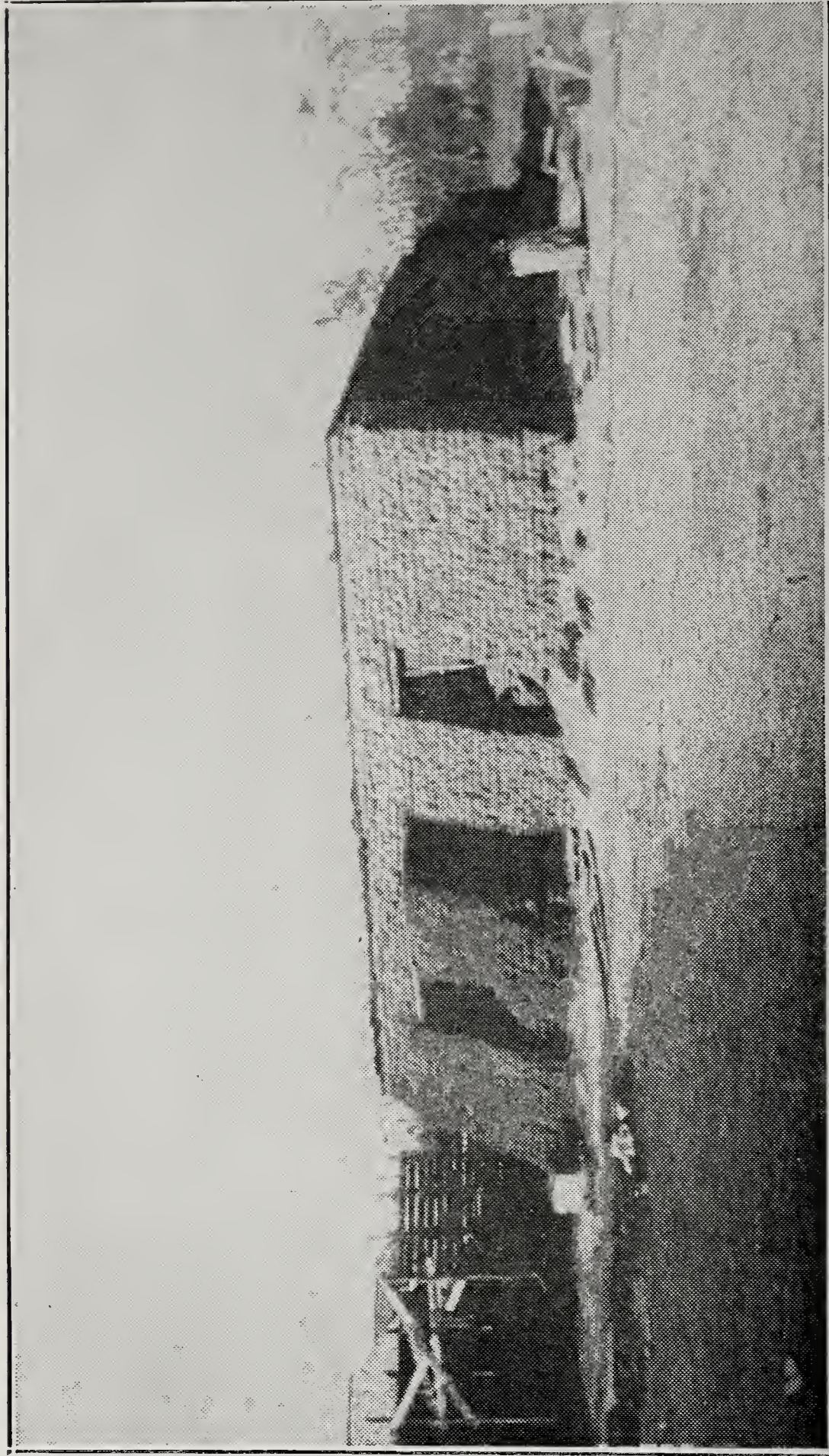
After the fire had passed Mother brought the cattle home and went at once to help Father, who was fighting so hard to keep the fire out of the timber-claim that his eyebrows were burned off. It was one of the worst fires we ever had. It arched over the Beaver as tho the creek were not there, and went on to jump the Loup. In fighting fire in short grass one had a chance, but in the blue-stem which stood waist high the fire swept all before it.

The pathos of pioneer life is keenly felt in sickness and death. Father observed that before the railroad came there had been no hog cholera, typhoid, diphtheria, or rats. In the twelve years before the town came, no doctor had been in the house. In the first eight years there were more deaths from gunshot wounds than from sickness. A man who was killed by accident started the graveyard.

Toward Sweetwater lived Mr. Nave, a widower, with a boy and two girls of about our age. They went to Grand Island with a team of old ponies, taking two or three days each way. When they got a late start they stopped with us the first night, and they always stopped for a night going home. After a long illness Mr. Nave died. They came for Father to make the coffin. He used boards that had been bought for the roof, and had a hard time getting them ripped to the right size. Then he hunted all around for screws. I can still see him looking everywhere for screws so that he would not have to nail the lid down. Mother lined the coffin with a sheet and made a pillow. I always wondered if she had not laid things by for just such an emergency.

The Parkhursts were going home one evening up Cemetery Hill a mile west of us. There was a gun in the bottom of the

wagon. Everybody except my father carried a gun in those days, so that they would always be ready to shoot rabbits and prairie chickens for meat. In getting out one of the boys kicked the gun and it went off, shooting four-year-old Minnie thru the knee. One of the boys came for Mother. Mrs. Parkhurst took the team and went for a neighbor to go after the doctor. Mr. Parkhurst carried Minnie home in his arms. It was three miles. The team was tired from the Boelus trip, and, with thirty miles to Kearney, it was the next afternoon before the doctor came. He gave chloroform and amputated the leg, Mother holding Minnie while he worked. But it was too late. Mother came home and tore up a black skirt, got some white goods for a lining, and took feathers from one of her pillows for the casket.



Cut by Courtesy of Ravenna News

THE SODDY — 1874-1886

PART III

Eva Abigail's Childhood

(As Told by Mary)

Eva Abigail was born in the soddy on the ranch April 18, 1879. It was a raw spring day. Laura, Charles and I were sent over the creek to the Miller place beyond the tree-claim. The Millers had a daughter about my own age. We thought it strange that we were to stay all day. Strange, too, that Mr. Miller hitched up and took Mrs. Miller over to our place, and Mrs. Benjamin Parkhurst was there and Mrs. Chaffee.

All thru the day I was very uneasy. I feared that something was going to happen, but did not suspect what it might be. When the cattle were brought home that evening, Father met us at the corral with the news that we had a baby sister. I did not stop, but ran to the house as fast as I could go. I shall never forget the first sight of that little black-haired baby! When she died at fifty-three her hair was still jet black, without a touch of gray.

Mrs. Phoebe Chaffee had a claim about two miles northwest, and was with us often from 1879 until the town came. Her husband was in a Soldiers' Home in Ohio — he was crippled. She had in her home an Indian girl named Cora, who had been given to her while teaching in an Indian school in New York state. It was the gift of a dying mother. This child exclaimed, when she saw the baby, "Smith has another calf!" Cora was Eva's first playmate.

Sister Clara was born April 19, 1883. Mrs. Henry C. Cochran was with us at the time. Tho four years younger, Clara was Eva's care and companion thru her growing years on the farm, and her schoolmate after the town came.

On the second day of November in that same year, Sister Laura was married to Charles N. Davidson, a neighbor. The service was conducted by the Reverend George Bent, a Congregational minister, graduate of Grinnell College, who was homesteading near Hazard. They stood on the carpet before the beds in the east room. The Davidson, Wiseman and Smith families were present. Mr. Davidson's mother was a Wiseman. They established their home on a farm about three miles northwest over the hills.

Then it was necessary for me to assume more responsibility in the house. There were two small children to be watched, and two hired men were kept most of the year. Mother had seen to it that we learned to cook, sew and keep house, and both Father and Mother insisted that we be neat and painstaking in all that we did.

There was always a big garden to be cared for, tho the work was done with teams and cultivator as much as possible. There were cabbages, early and late, and great Hubbard squashes that were stored in the cave for winter use. Navy beans were grown by the bushel, and a field pea which was used in winter, as we had no canned vegetables. A field of cane was provided to supply barrels of sorghum for the large family and to give us a supply of vinegar. Cucumbers were put up by the barrel or in ten-gallon kegs. Mother perfected a receipe that I have not seen excelled, but I have heard her say that it could only be done with cane sorghum. Sweet corn was dried by the half-bushel.

Our fruit was limited to wild plums, grapes and chokecherries, until the cherry trees and Whitney crabs came into bearing — tho we did have gooseberries and currants that we had brought from Iowa. The currants did not survive the drought, but we had gooseberry plants to give the neighbors. We had also a bed of asparagus which was almost unheard of in that country. It never failed to give us a supply, and seemed remarkably adapted to the semi-arid climate.

Father was postmaster at the Beaver Creek office from

1878 to 1886, and this made considerable work for all of us. Mother was assistant postmaster, and I could sell stamps and handle mail when they were away. The first year (1878) the mail came once a week to Sweetwater, Father hiring a man to bring it to Beaver Creek. Then the route was changed so that the mail came out of Kearney two days a week. Later still the stage-coaches came twice a day — one from Kearney and one from Loup City, at about 10 A. M. and 2 P. M. The sod house was a busy place, considering the limited space and the work to be done.

The wagon road from Grand Island up the Beaver valley went thru our farm. It was a day's travel — between thirty and forty miles by the trail, which made it convenient for travelers to stay with us over night, cooking supper on our stove, and many times asking for space to make beds on our floor. The postoffice was the natural stopping place. Signs along the road pointed: "X Miles to Smith's place." Strangers were received with real hospitality and permitted to camp in the yard or by the stacks.

There were no bridges at first. Parties often mired down at the ford in the river, especially when there was fresh quicksand in the spring, and they came to the house for help. To reach the tree-claim we forded the Loup twice, on the east and, returning, on the south, as the Beaver was too muddy to ford. Father at length persuaded the county to put in bridges, for which he furnished the cedar piling. It was brought from way up west on Clear Creek.

Sisters Eva and Clara were very fond of each other, which made it easy to care for them thru the day. The playhouse was on the shady side of the granary thru the summer. Eva was not a child of vigorous appetite, but was well and full of energy.

Now I will let Eva Abigail tell the story of her childhood as she told it to her own children and friends years afterward.

PART IV

Eva's Recollections

Read before "The Tyrants," Springfield, Missouri
November 28, 1921

BY EVA A. BUELL

"Oh Mamma, tell us a story about the time when you were a little girl," said Eugene and Katherine one day as I was getting them ready for bed.

And this is the story I told.

When I was a little girl I did not have any story-books, picture-books, balls, dolls, blocks, engines, electric motors, erectors, or a piano such as you have. There were no electric lights, nor a furnace in our house, either. I had a great family of corn-cob dolls, and a big marble with which to knock them down. I had a slate, and a little slate-pencil that I must never lose, because there was not another to be had when that one was gone. I never heard of such a thing as a tablet. I did not have a nice sewing basket for my needle and thread, as you have, Katherine — oh no! I kept my needle in the wall-paper behind the stove. I had only one real doll, a china doll with black hair and cold, cold cheeks. I never liked dolls very much, anyway. I had to fill the woodbox every night, and the colder the weather the more wood had to be carried in. When there was lots of snow on the ground the hired men used to help me.

But you wanted me to tell you some real stories about my father when he first came to Nebraska, and about some real Indians, didn't you?

First of all, I wonder if I ever told you how Nebraska got its name. You remember how the Platte River is filled

with little islands, how it has no banks to speak of, and how wide it is. The Indians used to call the Platte "Ne-brath-ka," which meant "flat water." Some people who like to joke say that the Platte River is a thousand miles long, a mile wide and an inch deep.

My father came to Nebraska in the early day when Omaha was a little country town. Being a civil engineer, he would often make long trips away from any kind of civilization. One evening, when they were a long way from any farmhouse and it was getting dusk, suddenly there came upon them a whole band of young Indians with bows and arrows riding on their ponies. Father and his companions were in a lumber wagon. After the Indians had formed a large circle around them, each man dropped on one knee behind his pony and drew his bow and arrow. Father never carried a weapon of any kind, but, thinking his Jacob's staff would serve as a gun, he raised it and said, "Puck-a-chee! Puck-a-chee!" This meant, "If you shoot, I will too." Then what do you suppose the Indians did? They all jumped on their ponies and rode away. Just as long as it was light Father and his companions could see the Indians huddled together on top of a hill, apparently watching their movements, but they rode on until finally Father spent the night in a friendly haystack. The Indians didn't bother them any more. Father said that was the nearest he ever came to being scalped.

On another trip a big snow-storm came up. It snowed and snowed. They rode until the snow got so deep that they couldn't drive the wagon any farther, and they had to get out and walk to keep from freezing to death. When it began to get light the next morning they saw a farmhouse in the distance. The walking was difficult, as the snow was almost waist deep. When at last they reached the house Father's feet were frozen so badly that two of his toes had to be amputated.

After a time Father returned to Iowa and began teaching school. It had been the custom for the teacher to treat all the children to peanuts and candy at Christmas time. In some

way the pupils found out that Father did not intend to treat them that year. Most of the pupils in this school were as large as he was. Since there was a lot of snow on the ground they took Father out, covered him all over with snow, and when they thought he had been there long enough they took him out and said, "Now will you treat us?" "No!" replied my father. They buried him in the snow again, and again asked him if he would treat them. Once more he refused. They did this three times and were about to repeat it when one of the little girls cried and begged the big boys to stop. One of them said, "Well, boys, let's stop, if Jane feels so badly about it." Afterward my father married this little girl who was destined to be my mother.

Thinking that the life of a farmer was the most independent after all, Father decided to make another trip to Nebraska. This time he was going as far north and west as he thought he could raise good corn, which was Latitude 42, Longitude 99. He went out to Kearney and then drove twenty-eight miles straight north and looked over the country. Here was a fine stream of water called Beaver Creek flowing into the South Loup River. To the north rose a level plateau; and north of that, a friendly hill; it was an ideal place for a farm. He went back to Iowa and brought his family to Kearney on the train. He had shipped his household goods and stock, and had rented the only available house in Kearney where he expected his family to live until the sod house was completed. The last piece of furniture had been placed in the house when — what do you suppose happened? The floor gave way, and all they had went into the six-foot cellar. What a mess! Father was beside himself to know what to do with his family, as there was not another place in Kearney for them. But Mother was a brave woman, and she said: "Erastus, I can get along anywhere you can."

So the family piled into the wagon and drove out to the home of a family living in a dugout six miles west of our place. Do you know what a dugout looks like? It is a room

dug into a hill. The south side of a hill is almost always chosen, because more sunlight gets in than if the room faced in any other direction. A front of sod is then built up, leaving room for a door and a window. In this dugout there was little or no furniture. The beds were made of small posts driven into the ground, with branches of trees laid across as springs and a tick stuffed with straw as a mattress. When visitors came they slept on the floor.

Mother was not pleased with the actions of the man who owned this dugout. He evidently thought Father had some money — a thing which was very scarce on the plains. As she saw him slip a revolver under his pillow before going to bed, she did not sleep a wink that night. Father had given Mother what little money he carried with him, and she was wearing it in a belt around her waist. It does not take very long to build a sod house, and you may be sure that ours was not delayed any longer than was necessary.

Our sod house was the finest in all the country 'round. It had a board floor, while others had dirt floors. It had four sod walls. Most of the others had only one, a friendly hill furnishing the other three. The walls were covered with honest-to-goodness wallpaper. Later we found that there was one corner where the roof didn't leak, and there we piled the bedding and kept the baby. There were *two* rooms in the house, some pictures, and real furniture. Your bedroom suite, Eugene, was in the old soddie. All these fine things that were going to furnish its rooms were stored in Kearney in that cellar.

Finally the house was done and the family had to stay in the dugout only one more night. Father had brought two boys with him from Iowa, and he sent them over to Kearney with two wagons to bring out the furniture and supplies. He gave them definite instructions not to start on the trip back unless they got everything loaded before ten o'clock, and that they should not come under any circumstances if it had rained the night before. But the boys came, in spite of the fact that they did not finish loading until after ten o'clock, and that there

had been a heavy shower the night before. The dugout to which they were bringing the furniture was located near the bank of Beaver Creek, which after the rain became a raging torrent. During the day the bridge had washed out.

The boys started with their loads expecting to camp at a certain place, but when they got there they were frightened by a rough gang of drunken men and decided to come on.

Father was awakened about midnight by the barking of the dogs. Thinking it was the boys, he jumped up and ran outside, shouting, "Don't drive in, boys! The bridge is gone!" The answer rang back from across the creek: "My God, Smith, man and team are both gone!"

The man finally reached the bank in safety, but every effort to save the team was in vain. Father lost all the cured meats and provisions which were to carry the family thru the first winter, their cook-stove, furniture and bedding, and their three best horses. Some of these things were found afterward. This accident left Father with only one team to plant his crops and break his fire-guards.

The first spring that the Smith family lived on their farm, rains had been abundant. Never did crops look better. Then one morning something happened. What was it that gave the sky such a peculiar grayish appearance? If one looked toward the sun it seemed as if great clouds were moving, but they were not storm clouds. There was a sound like a mighty rushing wind, but no wind could be felt against one's cheek. Then there was a hush, and suddenly the whole earth was a living mass of jumping, crawling grasshoppers. They covered the plants so thickly that one could not see the plants, and began devouring everything. That morning in July the corn was tall; by night nothing was left save a stump about as big as your thumb. Potatoes and onions were eaten right down into the ground. Farmers tried to cover up the plants, but the grasshoppers were so hungry that they ate holes in the cloth. They even ate the bark and buds of the fruit trees. It seemed that the whole earth was a chewing, struggling mass of grass-

hoppers whose appetites could not be satisfied. When they had eaten every living green thing, my father wished to goodness that they would move on — but no! They had come to stay.

What do you suppose the mother grasshoppers did? They bored holes in the ground in which to lay their eggs. After each mother grasshopper had laid about a hundred eggs, she died. The ground was covered with their bodies. The discouraged farmers in all the country 'round began to pray to God that the grasshoppers might be taken away. They planted their wheat and oats, and again abundant rain produced a good crop. Then the hungry little hoppers began to hatch. The farmers tried in every way to kill them, but in vain. Once more they prayed God to take them away. Then one day it began to rain and grew colder until the rain turned to snow, freezing to death the hoppers that were too little to fly. My father thought that if ever there was a direct answer to prayer, that certainly was. There were a few hoppers for several years afterwards, but never again did they overwhelm us.

Something more dreaded than the hoppers was the prairie fire. Every spring and every fall a fire-guard was made all around the land that lay near the house. This was done by plowing four to six furrows, then leaving a space ten to fifteen feet wide and plowing four to six furrows more. Then, some moonlight night, the grass between the furrows was set afire. This was great fun for us children. Such procedure made the land comparatively safe from ordinary fires. Near the house was a good-sized patch of plowed ground where the children were told to sit if Father and Mother must go to fight fire. We were always searching the horizon for a bit of smoke as a sign of approaching fire. Every adult carried matches and had a gunnysack handy.

One day the men were all away from home. The sky was clear, the air still. Off in the northwest Mother thought that she saw a little column of smoke rising. She went over in that direction to investigate, as the cattle were feeding near home that day. Since they had wandered farther than was

expected she hurried to bring them back, but soon found that the fire would overtake her before she could get them within the guard. In the tall prairie grass, with the burning tumbleweeds going on ahead, a little fire soon becomes a big roaring fire. She ran on ahead of the herd and set fire to a hill. When it was all burned over she drove the cattle onto the hill. Mother said that the fire swept past them with an awful roar, and with tongues of fire higher than a man's head.

Another day there were two fires coming at the same time — one from the northwest on our side of the creek, and one from the southwest on the other side. Mother fought the one on our side, and Father the one across the creek. When Mother had put out the one on our side she went across to help Father and found him nearly exhausted. His hat had been blown off and burned up. She tied her sunbonnet on his head and her apron around her own, and they fought fire the rest of the day. I have heard Father say many a time that no water he ever drank tasted half so good to him as the nasty dirty black water that was left in the pails as they fought that fire. Oh no, you little children will never see the miles on miles of burning prairie that were familiar to pioneer children, and you will miss one of the grandest, most awe-inspiring sights in the world. Never shall I forget the ashy-white pallor of my father's face when we were out watching the last prairie fire that ever came our way. It had worked into the young timber along the creek, and the flames were leaping fifteen or twenty feet in the air. Father said to Mother, "If it jumps the creek, Jennie, we are lost!" But it did not come across.

Another terror was the fear of Indians. Mother used to say that she lay awake many a night fearing that we would all be scalped before morning. One day she saw something winding in and out among the hills across the river that looked very much like Indians. Looking at them thru the field glasses, sure enough they were coming in a line down by the river, where they would camp before making a raid. Altho the grown-ups did not sleep that night, nothing happened — everything

was peaceful and still. In the next day or two Father found out that a mule trader had been thru the country buying up mules, and had tied them together while taking them down to Grand Island.

Indians often visited us as they roamed across the plains, but never harmed us in any way. Father always treated them kindly and never tried to deceive them. An Indian seemed to respect a man who always told him the truth. As they were great beggars, the farmers raised enough for themselves and the Indians too. They were especially fond of pumpkins and squashes. One day a friendly band were camping about half a mile from our house. They sent a big Indian up to the house for some squash. Father brought out quite a number — so many that the Indian was surprised. "Me have all these?" he asked, and Father said, "Yes." He picked out the two biggest, saying, "Send squaw after the rest."

One day a neighbor north of us thought that he would give the Indian more than he could carry. When he had brought them out the Indian asked, "Have all these?" "Yes," said our neighbor, "if you will take them all now." The Indian took his rope from behind his saddle, his knife out of his pocket, made a hole in each end of the pumpkins, strung them on the rope just as you string beads, threw them across his pony's back, and, with a whoop, rode away.

A poor, hungry old Indian came into our house one day. You know they do not have white men's manners. They never stop to knock at your door, but walk right in softly and creepy-like and are standing right over you before you know it.

If you scream or act frightened, they laugh and think it a good joke. Mother was working at the table getting dinner when this hungry Indian came in. A chicken was stewing on the stove. She gave him a seat and had him put up his feet toward the stove to get warm, thinking that a bowl of chicken broth would be just the thing for him. He took one taste and handed it back, saying, "Too much chicken — too much chicken!" As a matter of fact it was not the chicken that he ob-

jected to; it was the salt. Indians care very little for salt. Then Mother went to the cupboard, cut a piece of bread about an inch thick, and spread it with pumpkin. He ate it greedily, saying, "This is good — this is good!"

Another time a squaw called to see us. She had a little girl about my own age, and wanted Mother to give her one of my dresses. I had a little red dress with black grapes on it, of which I was very fond. It was a bit small for me, so Mother said, but I didn't think so. Since I thought that if anyone was to give that little Indian girl my dress, I should be the one to do it, I climbed up on the trunks, took the dress off the hook, and just threw it at her. Oh, how pleased and happy she was! Her mother put it on her and she danced and sang for us. I have never liked dancing since. Never in all my life have I had another dress that looked so pretty as that little red calico with the black grapes and grapevines on it. I wish I might have one now.

By and by other settlers began coming in. One family had two little girls whose Eastern friends used to send them things. Once they sent the girls some big white hearts with the heads of pretty girls on each side. One pulled off the pretty heads and ate the sweetish white stuff. Oh, it felt so funny to chew and chew and never be able to eat it up! These little girls had two big wax dolls that looked like real children. Oh no, you couldn't play with them—they were just to look at. Once when the little girls brought them down for me to see, my mother put them right away in a bureau drawer. I could peep at them only once in a while, because this was a warm day and if they became warm they would melt.

One time there was such a lovely family came to live a mile and a half north of us. They had a little girl older than I and two boys younger. Now in those days, when folk lived only a mile and a half from you it was almost like living in your own dooryard. I was very fond of this white girl, and we are friends to this very day. One morning she came down after the mail, as Father kept the postoffice. When she got her mail she asked Mother if I might go "a piece" toward home

with her. Since Mother said that I might, I went with her up past the prairie-dog town to the top of the big hill where we could look away off across Beaver Creek to the south miles away, and across the Loup River to the southeast for miles and miles. As we stood looking at the crops we sang this song with all our might. The tune is "Beulah Land."

"I've reached the land of corn and wheat
Where all that grows is good to eat.
The hoppers came one blissful day:
Now, all my crops have passed away.
"Oh, Nebraska land, sweet Nebraska land!
As on the highest hill I stand,
I look away across the plain
And wonder when it's going to rain.
And then I stand and view my corn,
And vow I'll never sell my farm."

Then we sang another about "The Little Old Sod Shanty on the Claim." I have forgotten the verses, because I have not thought of those old songs for so many years, but this is the chorus:

"Oh, the hinges are of leather,
And the windows have no glass,
And the roof it lets the howling blizzard in;
And I hear the hungry coyote as he sneaks up thru the grass
'Round my little old sod shanty on the claim."

After we had viewed the corn and the wheat and decided that it was not going to rain that day, she persuaded me to go home with her. At dinner time, just as I was about to help them eat their delicious dinner of stewed chicken and hot biscuits, Mrs. Bourne said, "Eva, who is that coming?" Sure enough, there was my mother with a big stick in her hand. She simply looked at me and said, "Eva!" I jumped and ran, keeping just far enough ahead of that stick so that it didn't touch me. She told me how the men had seen a great grey timber wolf almost as large as a calf in those draws only the day before, and that this kind of wolf sometimes ate little girls when they got very hungry. I didn't get any whipping, any chicken or any hot biscuit, nor any dinner at home. I never ran away before or since, and I never wanted to, either.

Oh yes, Eugene, we used to catch lots of fish—all we wanted. It took only a few minutes to pull out a big fish. We used to catch eel, too. They are sweeter than catfish. My brother used to trap as well as fish. He caught many beavers. Once he caught an otter. My mother was frightened when she saw how large it was. She said that it was big enough to kill him. He used to see wild cats, also.

One day there was great excitement at our house. A railroad was coming our way, and some men wanted to buy our farm. I remember that Mother cried—she did not want to sell the farm. I guess she must have loved the rattlesnakes, or the killing of them, as she killed as many as five in one day. Or maybe it was the prairie dogs, or the cacti, or the streams of fish, or something that I did not understand. The farm was sold. The railroad brought ever so many people to live with us—right in our own yard, sure enough! We were going to have a school. I did want so much to know my A, B, C's before I started in; but, to save me, I couldn't remember what came after C. A town hall was built, and a Sunday school organized.

At Christmas time the Sunday School gave a Christmas tree and entertainment for the children—something very different from anything I had ever known before. While I was dazzled by the brightness of it all, a funny looking little man dressed in red, with cotton on his suit to look like fur, came prancing and dancing and capering about. Mother said, "There's Santa Claus, Eva."

"Santa Claus!" thought I. "You told me that no one ever saw Santa Claus—that he vanished at the sight of mortal eye; and here he is prancing around and making a regular fool of himself! There isn't any such thing as Santa Claus. I've just been fooled, that's all!"

Oh, how unhappy and miserable I was! I began to doubt all the things my Sunday School teacher told me, too.

Well now, children, I have told you a long, long story, and it is past your bedtime. Come, I'll hear you say your prayer and kiss you good night!

PART V

The Town

In 1886 all was changed for us. The Burlington and Missouri River Railroad was pushing to the northwest. In January Father sold a two-thirds interest in a section of land to the Lincoln Townsite Company, and ceased farming operations. Mother wanted the "York Clause" put in the bill of sale — namely, that any lot upon which liquor was sold should revert to the family; but R. O. Phillips, the company's secretary, would have none of it. When asked if they would like the town to bear any family name, both said "No." Mr. Phillips suggested "Ravenna," which they both liked. The first streets were also given Italian names.

Mary was married on August 4th, in the evening. The groom was Fred Boyden, the clerk in the drug store, who had recently come from Chicago. He played the organ in the church and sang. The ceremony took place in the east room. The minister was the Reverend Mr. Wells, an Episcopalian from Nebraska City. Dr. Henry Boyden, brother of the groom, from Grand Island, was among those present. On October 1st the young couple lost their personal belongings in a fire which destroyed the drug store where they were living in the rear. The store was rebuilt at once, but Mary continued to help at home with her mother until they moved to Norfolk in 1888.

Charles died of typhoid on December 3rd. He was sixteen years old. It is to be regretted that we have so little record of the boy who grew up on the ranch where the town now stands. The tradition is that he was a fine, clean fellow, and a great favorite of the teacher, Mrs. Hughes, during the short term that he was able to go to school. The Reverend R. M.

Travis, first pastor of the Congregational Church, conducted the service. The burial was in the west part of town, tho later the body was moved to a lot in Highland Cemetery. There remained in the home the father and mother, Eva and Clara.

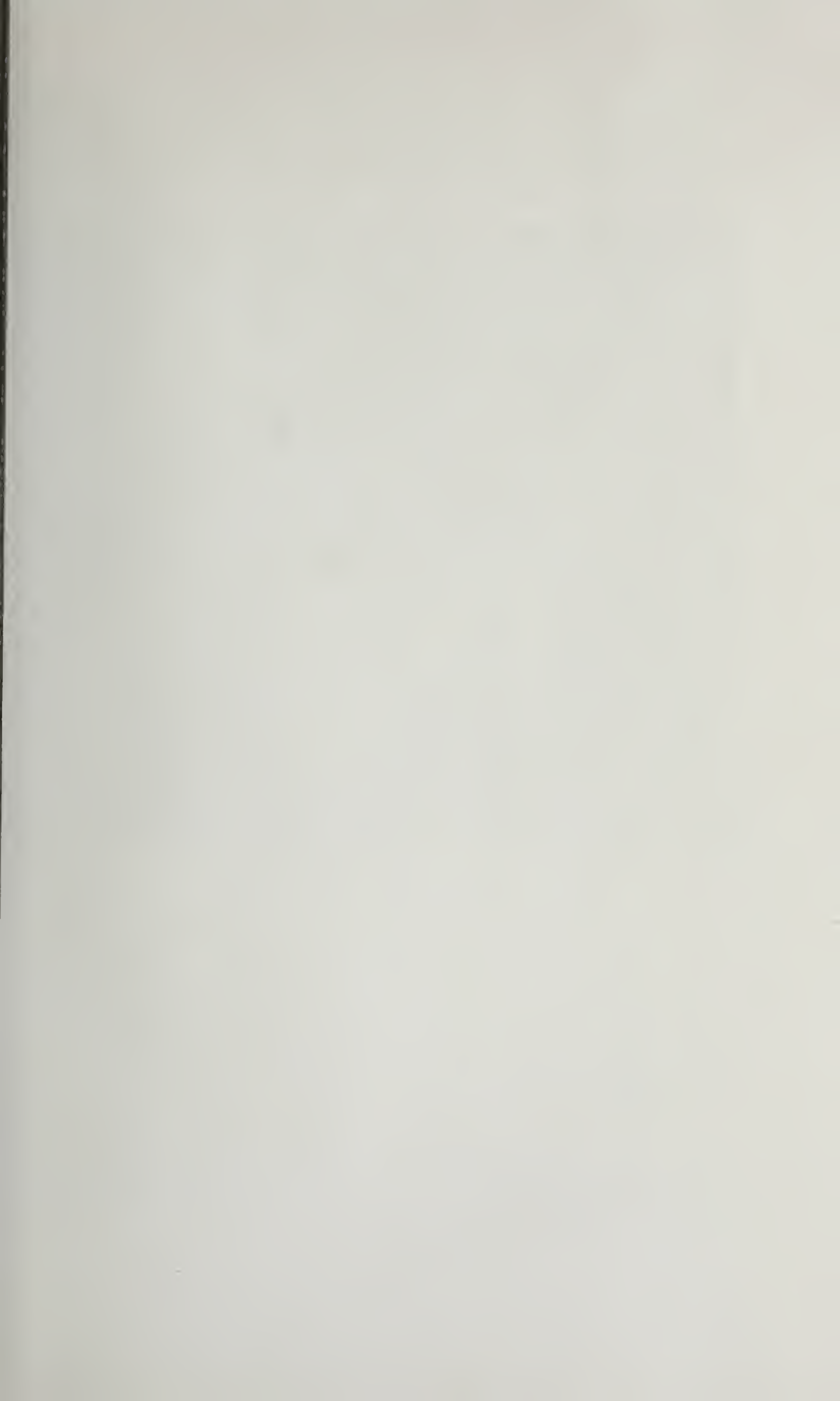
Primitive conditions continued all around. There was much to be done. Father was busy with the houses he was building. Mother was a born nurse and missionary, and with ready sympathy and skill she went wherever there was need, with Father's fullest approval. People sent for her in sickness when they did not know what else to do. Dr. S. N. Bentley, from the University of Pennsylvania, located in Ravenna and for years was closely associated with the Smith family. He called Mother his first assistant, and said he did not know what he could have done without her in those days when trained nurses were not to be had. As she went back and forth among her patients the girls were often left at home to care for themselves, tho there was usually help in the house.

Ravenna was one of the many small towns of about a thousand people scattered over the plains of the Middle West, whose features were delineated so vividly by Sinclair Lewis in "Main Street." It had the advantage of being a division on the Burlington railroad one hundred and twenty-eight miles west of Lincoln, and therefore had a roundhouse and a hotel. The main street was merely a wide place in the north-south road, dusty and treeless except for one historic cottonwood. The new frame house of the Smiths stood just west of the soddy at the head of the street. The familiar red grain elevators towered conspicuously beside the tracks.

A dam was built on Beaver Creek, and Charles Seeley erected a flour mill. In spite of many floods and rebuildings the dam stood until 1935, tho electricity had taken the place of water in operation of the mill. It burned down in 1939.

A newspaper was started which became a sheet well devoted to the local interests, under the able editorial management of C. B. Cass.

The first banking was done in a tent during construction





"PLAID DRESSES"
CLARA AND EVA — ABOUT 1892

days. The cashier, who came from Omaha, boarded with the Smiths. Later a forerunner of the "State Bank" was established, which stood until the crash of 1932.

A creamery was built east of the town, which developed into a leading industry under the management of C. A. Clark from northern New York. In later years it was merged with the Fairmont company.

William Jennings Bryan was a well-known figure in the town long before he became a presidential candidate. He was entertained in the Smith home. He was a cousin of C. N. Davenport, the druggist.

Ravenna real estate was advertised far and wide by Harry A. Kufus. It is said that he once presented every member of Congress with a Ravenna cane.

Usually four saloons were in operation to meet the demands of the town and the country round about.

There were three churches from the very first. Mr. Smith and the Townsite Company donated lots to each of them. The Congregational and Methodist churches maintained resident pastors; the Catholic was supplied from Grand Island for many years. Priests or sisters who came in the service of the church were often entertained in the Smith home.

Eastern stock prevailed in the founding of the town, and many of the early citizens were school and college bred. But the settlement which became permanent in the town and upon the neighboring farms became increasingly German and Bohemian. These two elements added significantly to the life of the community. They gave a cosmopolitan air to the social contacts, a seasoning of the New World with the Old. They made the Ravenna band famous thruout the state, while in sports and athletic games Ravenna teams came to be among the best. The town is the home of John Pesek, wrestler of current fame.

Eva was most concerned in the coming of the school. She was then seven years old, slender, high-strung, exceedingly sensitive, and very anxious to learn. Her enthusiasm was en-

couraged by her mother, who was equally ambitious for her children. The first schoolhouse was the familiar one-room affair — tho not painted red. Her first teacher was Mrs. John Hughes, a cultured woman from Wisconsin who had been caught in the wave of pioneer adventure. She remained Eva's lifelong friend.

When the four-room brick schoolhouse was built two blocks away, nothing was permitted to interfere with attendance. In blizzardy weather Father bundled the girls up and went to help them against the wind. Both were eager pupils. A word of praise from Dr. Bentley, a school visitor, encouraged Eva to preserve and cultivate her characteristically smooth-flowing, legible hand. Clara was precocious in her school work, and early assumed mature and ladylike graces which caused her to seek association with older people in pleasing ways.

Eva had a childlike impulse toward poetic expression, and cherished some fragments of her early thought.

"I love the merry summer rain
When it falls upon the ground,
When it comes against the window-pane,
And sparkles all around."

But her father's laughter — "Poetry — Poetry! Who'll buy my poetry?" early quenched the Muse.

Her reading was regulated by her father's severe distaste for fiction — an attitude which she fully shared as she grew older. The books available in the house were Plutarch's Lives, history, biography, classics, and works of science. She was sure that her father would not have given her the set of Shakespeare which he did, if he had read it all himself. Those were the days when Charles Darwin was the popular idol of the intellectually alert, and Science began to possess the imagination. In that fascinating field Mr. Smith made early excursions with unusual preparation of mind and information.

During school days someone had won a Demorest Medal, then being offered by the Woman's Christian Temperance Union for excellence in temperance declamation. Perhaps it

was Gertie Wheelock, or Ella Pool. Eva said, "I'm going to have one, too!" Her father helped her to make a selection, and drilled her in the front room. No girl was ever happier than she was when she won the medal. This experience determined her college work afterward.

The conveniences of town life were more than counter-balanced by added responsibilities and anxieties. Mother said that she was never as happy in the big house as she had been in the soddy.

Clara of the bright hair and vibrant spirit died after thirteen weeks' illness on June 29, 1895, when only twelve years old. Eva never recovered from the shock of losing her sister playmate, and the loneliness of the months following.

Mary, who had gone to Chicago with her husband, was desperately ill for the next ten months — until February, 1896. Mother went to her as soon as possible after Clara's death, and stayed until she was able to bring Mary and the children (Blake and Helen) back with her to Ravenna.

The next year (June 22, 1897) Eva's mother died. She had been ironing on the west porch all the morning, little Blake bringing her the irons from the stove. At noon someone came to the door. "Mrs. Smith, won't you come and see Will's baby? It's awful sick!" and she answered, "Yes, Katie, I'll come as soon as I can." When she went to dress she fell across the bed unconscious, and died before evening. She was forty-nine years old, one of the multitude of fine-spirited pioneer women whose endurance challenges our imagination. The countryside turned out to pay her tribute.

Eva graduated from High School in 1898, with a class of five. In the fall, anxious to give her the opportunities of education of which his family had been so long deprived, her father took her to Oberlin, Ohio, where she entered the senior Academy class. It was a frontier girl's first experience away from home, and she did not find it easy to make contacts or catch the pace of better prepared students. However, she made three friends who were loyal correspondents for years — Al-

berta Brenneman of Pennsylvania, Mabel Swartz of Ohio, and Ora Swihardt of Indiana.

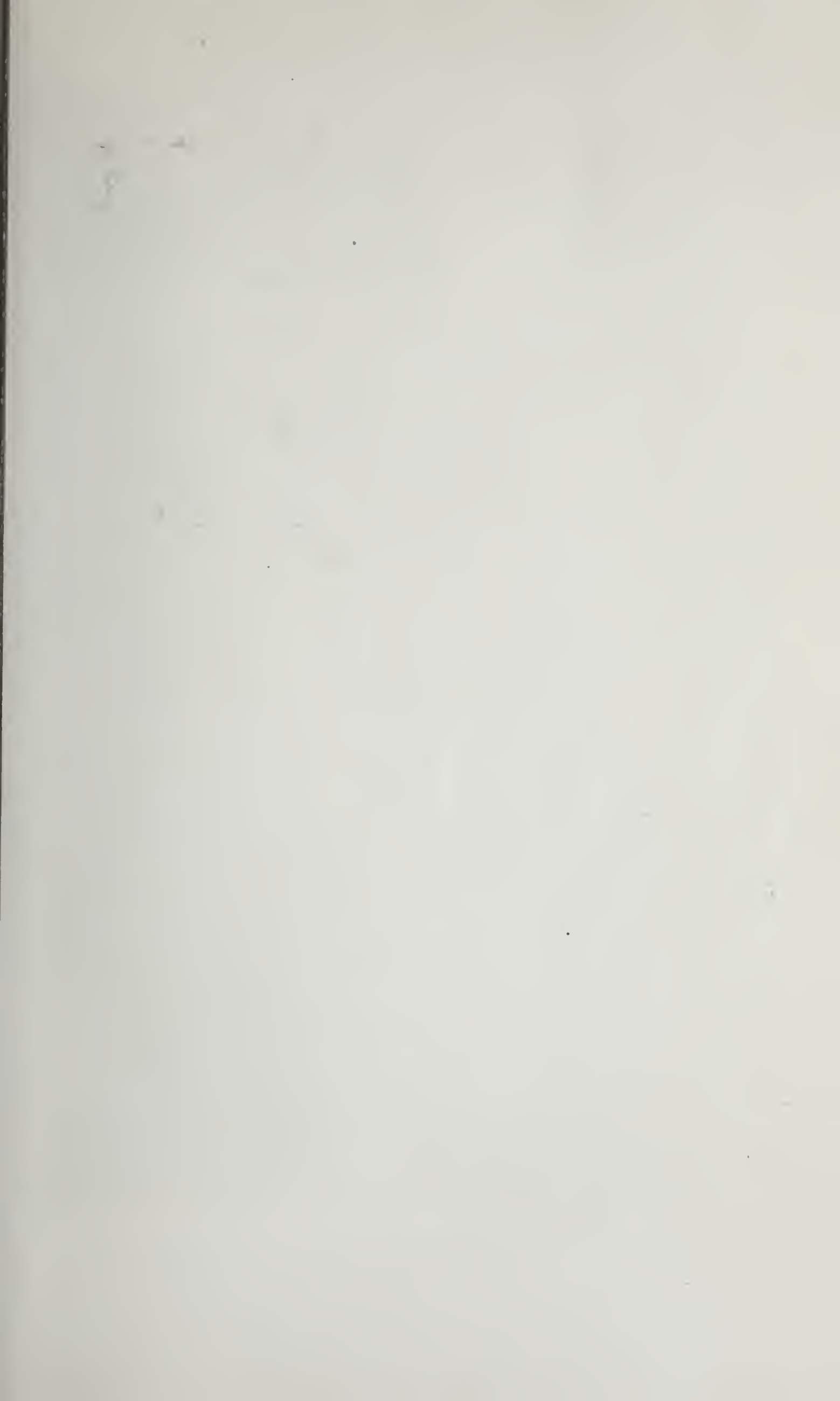
The next fall she went to Highland Park, a private college in Des Moines, Iowa. It was a logical place for her to go, as it was near the kinfolk of the Person and Smith families who had remained in Iowa, and it was easy to week-end (even in horse and buggy days) at Adelphi or Runnells with uncles, aunts and cousins.

She received a degree in oratory in August, 1901; but, with her ambitions set upon a place in the Lyceum circuit or a Chautauqua platform, she continued her study for another year. Both were flourishing thru the Middle West at that time.

Her ambitions were cut short by a call of duty. Mary was again established with a family of her own, and Eva returned to keep house for her father, who was alone. Her mother's careful training had already laid the foundations for this responsibility. Her father told her to get a sack of flour and a cook book, to throw out ruthlessly all that was not the best. Her immense loaves of bread of finest texture and flavor would alone have made the table acceptable.

There were strawberries, cherries and apples growing on the place, which comprised three fifty-foot town lots. None of this fruit was permitted to go to waste. It was the beginning of a plentiful supply capably stored in the cellar for winter, which was characteristic of her housekeeping always. She could can, easily and successfully, almost anything which the garden or market afforded. Mr. Smith always put in several barrels of apples as a health food, regardless of price.

With old-fashioned persistence in being always employed, Eva, in addition to housekeeping, her own dressmaking, and social and church activities, found time for all sorts of fancy work, for which she had a natural talent. Burnt wood (pyrography) was then the rage. Several large pieces were so decorated — a tabourette, a pedestal and a dresser box — all of which long remained in use. Of cushion covers, monogrammed linen, bits of lace and dress decorations there was no end.





MR. SMITH — BLAKE — EVA — MRS. SMITH — HELEN
THE NEW HOUSE IN RAVENNA — 1896

Given motive and opportunity, her invention was abundant and her taste remarkable. Her imagination was quick to invade new fields of expression and beauty.

Eva's enthusiasm, training and skill made her useful in the village. She coached the speakers of the graduating class of 1903. With amateur talent she staged the plays of "Pygmalion and Galatea" and "Esmeralda." She compiled books of her favorite readings, and kept on file the Werner's magazine, which was devoted to the study and practice of expression. Her fine interpretations and control of emotions gave her readings continued interest.

In this frontier railroad town, then seventeen years old, there was a congenial group of thirty or forty young people with whom Eva was actively associated. The churches were on friendly terms, as there was no serious social or denominational cleavage. The minister who came from Connecticut to the Congregational Church in the summer of 1903 was cordially received into the circle. Eva's devotion to the church, and their mutual interest in Oberlin College of which he was a graduate, threw them often together. They were married January 18, 1905, at three in the afternoon. The bridal party went the two blocks from her home to the church between high snow banks on the only clear and open day in two weeks of stormy and sub-zero weather. The Reverend David Bain of the Presbyterian circuit, Sodtown and Sweetwater, officiated. The Misses Rizpah Clark and Mabel Eckerson were the bride's attendants, and Messrs. Ray Clark and C. D. Conn stood with the groom. Dr. Joseph Tomiska was usher. The bride's wedding gown was her own creation of cream wool crepe. During the ceremony friends observed a ray of sunshine which lighted the bride's head like a halo. The church held a wedding reception in the evening, and the boys of the town gave a kindly modified and shortened serenade.

PART VI

The Minister's Wife

Ravenna

Eva's relations to the village life were altogether so simple and wholesome that she was accepted as the minister's wife without any interruption of the established friendly and social activities — a recognition of her natural qualities of leadership.

Housekeeping began in the parsonage, while Aunt Ann came from Iowa to care for her brother in the homestead, but this arrangement lasted only a few months. For three years Eva kept two households, tho more and more it became the tendency to leave the parsonage for the home place. It had spacious grounds, and fine trees and shrubbery which her father carefully nurtured. Besides, there were the weather observations to be taken at 7 a.m., 2 p.m. and 9 p.m., to which she had become habituated while helping her father. For a long time she made out the monthly reports. At the parsonage there was also a garden, and more trees to be cared for on the church lot.

Sister Laura died at Mary's home in Ravenna June 30, 1905, after a long illness which was called asthma. She left her husband with seven children, the oldest of whom were already grown. She was of Free Methodist persuasion in later years. There is little record of her life. It may be said that she did greatly in her own sphere. The children were taught to come to the table only when washed clean, with hair combed, like ladies and gentlemen. How much that means, those who know the limitations of frontier farm life can well understand. It is her children who have carried on the pioneer tradition by finding their places in the farther west.

In the summer of 1906 a trip was made to Connecticut to visit the home and people of Eva's husband. This was the first of the excursions which came to characterize the vacation period. They stopped among the Iowa kinfolk on the way. The impression made by Niagara was beyond expectations. The power and beauty of it moved her to tears. Familiar with the open spaces of the Western plains, she was fascinated by the green hills, the small farms, and the closely crowding villages and cities of the East. Standing on Meriden Mountain with a large part of the lower Connecticut Valley in view, she exclaimed, "Why, it's like a great park!"

Grand Island

In July, 1908, we moved the familiar thirty miles to Grand Island, which had become a city of ten thousand people, third in size in the state, situated on both Burlington and Union Pacific railroads.

Mary and her family took charge of the homestead, caring for their father, who died within eighteen months at the age of seventy-nine.

The commodious Grand Island parsonage took the impress of Eva's own genius for a home. A back porch and furnace were added, and abundant flowers and tall hollyhocks brightened the fence of the narrow lot at the rear of the church.

During the summer of 1909 we were in Colorado, took several trips out of Denver, and spent a week at Crystola in the Ute Pass. It was her first experience in the mountains and she was disappointed not to find them all of crystal like museum pieces, but soon surrendered to their great grandeur. The evening we left Colorado Springs the sun was setting behind a thundercloud, giving the most brilliant, stabbing streamers of blood red. She was distressed lest she might not see Colorado again or anything so beautiful.

The children were born in Grand Island — Carleton Eugene and Katherine Mayhew. The January after Eugene was born she returned from town with her eyes shin-

ing as she opened the door, saying, "You'll not be angry when you see what I have?" And brought out the postcard kodak which ever since has kept a record of the growth of the children, events and details of family life. That record has now grown to many volumes.

When Eugene was ten months old a second trip was made to Connecticut. On the way she attended the graduation (at the Rush Medical School in Chicago) of Mary's son, H. B. Boyden, who was to follow in his uncle's footsteps as a physician in Grand Island. They spent the summer on the grandfather's farm near Plymouth. A sister-in-law said of her afterward: "As I was a girl about fifteen years old, and eager to learn everything, Eva made a wonderful and lasting impression upon me. I thought her very capable, and how I absorbed her ways — making a cake, ironing, dressing a chicken; particularly taking the feathers off with a rubbing, rotary motion which I adopted and have continued to this day."

After the birth of Katherine a long, threatening goiter demanded an operation, for which Dr. Boyden took her to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. It was the year of the Omaha tornado, and her husband, passing thru the city the night of the storm, was several hours late in reaching the hospital next morning, to her great anxiety. The family was scattered for six weeks. Eugene was with Aunt Mary in Ravenna, and the baby with Mrs. Willard Place in the home. Martha Otto was maid in those days. There was a maid most of the time when the children were small.

While convalescing Eva made a handbag of Irish crochet which was one of her masterpieces. Later she made two bead bags — a gray one for Mary, and a bronze bag for her own use.

Sunday-School Years

Eva was hardly able to be about again when her husband became superintendent for Nebraska of the Congregational Sunday-School and Publishing Society. They bought a house on Tenth Street, and immediately it responded to her impulse

to mould the place where she lived. The kitchen windows were rebuilt for light, cupboards were added for convenience, an electric range installed when they were just coming into use. There was no furnace, but a large base burner gave excellent service. The yard was enclosed with a "Tully" wire fence which gave the children ample and safe playroom, with a swing, and a sandpile under the bedroom window. There was a beautiful Norway maple in the front yard, and the whole place was enlivened by flowers which grew like magic under her smile. Rhubarb and gooseberries were added to the garden. There was a barn, and a chicken-house which she stocked with white Plymouth Rocks from Johnson's at Clay Center.

It was on Tenth Street that she reared the children while her husband was absent on weekly field trips. They exchanged letters daily, but the situation threw the routine responsibility upon her. She endured the usual round of measles and whooping cough. She collected quite a library on nutrition, child study, plays and management, and studied carefully the Montessori methods then current. She used the Bradley kindergarten materials with full sets of blocks.

It was the family custom to return thanks at each meal. In her husband's absence she led, as she had seen her mother do when she was a child. Joining hands around the table, they repeated together :

"Father, we thank Thee for this food.
Help us to be kind and good.
By Thy grace we must be fed;
We thank Thee for our daily bread."

Often the Psalms were repeated in unison at the family devotions. Those most frequently used were the first, the twenty-third, and the one-hundred-and twenty-first. The bedtime parting was like this :

"Good night! Sleep tight.
Wake up in the morning bright
To do what's right
With all your might!
Good night. Sleep tight!"

She attended church quite regularly in the pastorate of the Reverend T. S. Dungan. Eugene early learned to sit quietly. The children were permitted the Sunday-school papers and pictures as a means of occupying the time. There were many good friends in the church whose comradeship was a great comfort thru these years.

In the summer of 1914 we were a second time in Colorado. She was not strong and rest was necessary. The first week was at Eldora above Boulder, and then a whole month at Bailey's in the South Platte canon where the cottage commanded a full view of six successive peaks of the Kenosha range.

In the spring of 1916 the family moved to Lincoln. The eight years in Grand Island proved to be their longest stay in any one place. Lincoln was an easy point from which to reach out over the state; some of our Ravenna friends were there, and in many ways it was a congenial place of residence. The family joined the Plymouth Church, which was near at hand.

The stay in Lincoln was short. In the fall of 1917 her husband fell ill with nervous exhaustion, which confined him to the house thru most of October. In order that he might be more at home with the children he took the pastorate of the First Church in Springfield, Missouri. When the whistles welcomed the Year 1918 they were on a 'Frisco train pulling out of Kansas City for the south. Her unstable health had made these four and a half years so much alone with the children a matter of remarkable fortitude and endurance.

Springfield

In Springfield life passed into a new stage. The parsonage was modern, fine and ample. It was situated across the street from the Drury College campus, the president's house, and a grove of persimmon trees. It is a city of abundant trees and comfortable homes. The years that followed were strenuous and enjoyable. Her health was greatly improved. Stu-

dents were found to work for board and room who proved most acceptable members of the family circle. The children, who had just begun school in Lincoln, found Boyd School only a block away. We were in Springfield until both were in Junior High.

As a matter of impartiality it was an unwritten rule that the minister's wife should not be officially responsible for any particular group in the church program, tho she was superintendent of the primary department for a season. She was faithful in the Woman's Association and the Missionary Society. She was made a life member of the Woman's Board of Missions of the Interior by the gift of one hundred dollars in her name by the women, who were generous givers. At the church services she was always in her place by the east window, with the children, twice on Sundays.

She counted it one of the privileges of the parsonage to entertain the succession of ministers, officials and missionaries who visited this college church of some five hundred members. Miss Miriam Woodbury of the Home Board was welcome as a friend. President Charlotte DeForest of Kobe College, Japan, Miss Eva M. Swift of Madura, India, Arthur C. Ryan of Turkey (later president of the American Bible Society), and Secretary C. H. Patton of the American Board were among those who came.

One Thanksgiving she gathered at dinner eight Congregational ministers and their families resident in and about Springfield, most of whom were retired from service. It was a cosmopolitan company from many states of the Union, from Germany and from Africa.

Her handicraft and contagious, stimulating spirit won her a place in the "Hardanger Club," a group of ladies who met for social purposes and specialized in good food, each giving a dinner to the group once a year. She prized the gold bracelet which they gave her when leaving Springfield.

Eva was invited to join Chapter BG of the PEO, where she found a wide circle of acquaintance which was much ap-

preciated. For two years she was honored with the presidency of the Chapter, which she represented at Canton in 1922; a year later she was hostess when Springfield entertained the convention.

In her well worn Bible used in Springfield days were pasted these rules of social conduct:

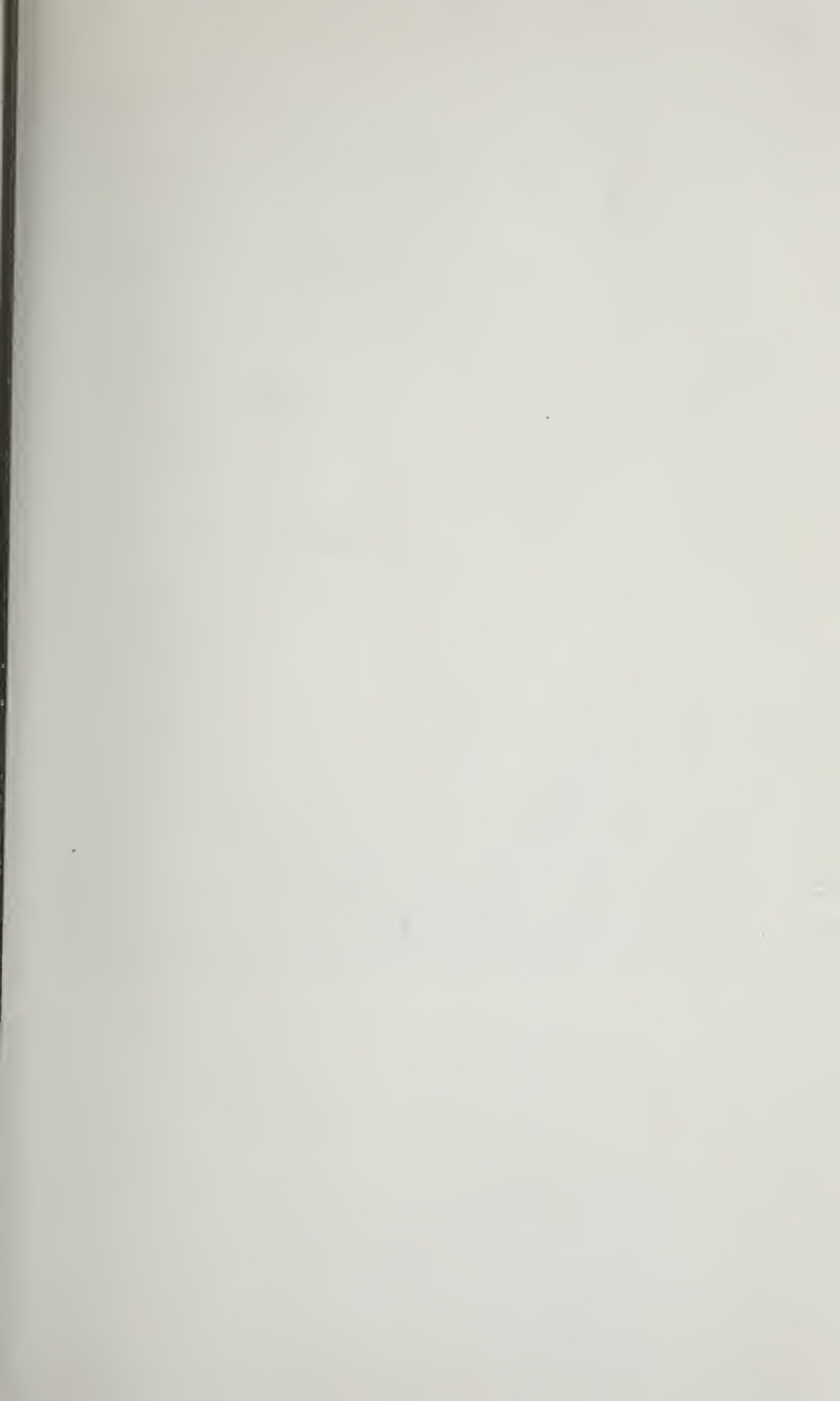
The Friendship Commandments

1. Don't contradict people — even when you know you are right.
2. Don't be inquisitive about the affairs of your friends.
3. Don't underrate anything because you don't possess it.
4. Don't believe that everyone else in the world is happier than you are.
5. Don't conclude that you have never had any opportunities in life.
6. Don't believe all the evil that you hear.
7. Don't be rude to your inferiors in social position.
8. Don't jeer at anybody's religious belief.
9. Learn to hide your aches and pains — few care.
10. "Do unto others as you would be done by."

The six weeks' vacation given at Springfield was always used to the full. There were so many places to go that we never arrived at a summer home, which might have been wise. Each year found us doing something different. She did not care for camping out, for the flies, or the ants, or the uncertain accommodations. Yet she was always ready to go, and was a most competent manager of the commissariat, tho in later years we found it better to eat in established places than from a lunch basket.

The first car was new in 1918. It took us back to Ravenna, and on to Colorado for a third visit. We spent a glorious week in Estes Park and returned by way of Denver, Pueblo and southern Kansas, spending a Sunday in Wichita. The trip was 2,300 miles.

In 1919 we occupied the Abel cottage at Cedar Gap, thirty miles east of Springfield — one of the highest points in the state, and which commanded a view of the Boston Mountains in Arkansas. In spite of ticks and jiggers we roamed the hills, and put up blackberry jam in quantities on a kerosene stove.





THE FAMILY — LINCOLN — 1917

The whole family made the Pacific Coast tour in 1921. We went on the official train to the National Council of Congregational Churches at Los Angeles from Kansas City *via* Salt Lake City. There was an abundance of good company. Rev. L. J. Sharp of Cleveland, Dr. and Mrs. S. H. Woodrow of St. Louis, Superintendent Gonzales of Kansas, and Secretary Patton of the American Board were in our car. Dr. W. E. Barton often came thru, and the children learned to know and follow him. He was candidate for moderator that year. We visited Dr. James Harwood and his brother Charles, co-founders and long trustees of Drury College. After short stops at San Francisco and Portland we went to Seattle and for a week were guests of the Washington Conference in their summer assembly at Seabeck. We stopped with the family of nephew Robert Davidson at Yakima, Washington, and spent four days in Yellowstone Park on the return to Nebraska and home.

The Ravenna home was empty in 1922. Mary had moved to Crete, where her son Lawrence was in Doane College. We rented furniture and camped for a month in the old place. The children fished in the creek that ran thru the ranch, and Eva found many friends of other years. The town was now lighted by electricity and was being paved thruout. This was her last visit, as the home was sold soon afterward.

In 1923 we were in "Pilgrim" at Frankfort, Michigan, where the Congregational people have long held an assembly. Our cottage was in the deep woods. There was daily swimming in Crystal Lake, trips to the bluffs over Lake Michigan, and fishing with Professor Paris Buell Stockdale of Ohio State University, who was there on his wedding trip and lived in an adjoining cottage. Several days we picked cherries in nearby orchards. We found many old friends in the colony and hoped to return again, but never did.

Texarkana

After seven years in Springfield, in 1925 the family moved at the close of school to Texarkana, a southern city on the line

between Arkansas and Texas. It is surrounded by the cotton fields of the Red River Valley, and full of the traditions of the Texas border. A strong Congregational church had been organized here twenty years before by Dr. F. E. Maddox, a liberal Presbyterian, tho far south of normal Congregational territory.

The four-hundred-mile trip was thru a beautiful country of hills and mountains traversing the Ozark and Ouachita National Forests of western Arkansas. There were miles of primitive roads which followed the beds of streams for considerable distances, and we forded the Belle Fourche River. However, during the three years we were in Texarkana all but a few miles of this route were improved with modern gravel and some concrete.

For lack of other occupation both children did summer work in the Texas High School, as they continued to each summer until they graduated with honors from our Arkansas High School in 1928.

Many things made the Texarkana residence novel and interesting. We lived two months in Texas, but after that on the Arkansas side, where we had our own house at 1302 Pecan Street. To live in a house that we owned was one of Eva's dreams. She hoped some day to build a house as she would have it, and to that end she studied, cut plans from magazines, and kept extensive notes in preparation. The Texarkana house was well built—a cottage of six rooms on one floor, without basement, after the southern fashion. A bedroom and lavatory were added for Eugene. The butler's pantry was enlarged to a breakfast room with a great window which gave the effect of taking our morning meals in the rose garden, in bloom ten months of the year. An ornamental fence replaced the old one, making a large and secluded back yard. She was proud of two large papershell pecan trees, which one year bore two bushels of nuts. There were figs which gave delicious bits for breakfasts and preserves. An old chicken house, rebuilt, was "the shack" where Eugene spent his spare time de-

veloping an electric laboratory and almost an amateur radio station. The front of the house was landscaped and soon smothered with shrubs — ligustrum, nandina, privet, jasmine, crepe myrtle, cedars and others, all of which grew famously as things do in that warm, moist climate.

To escape the summer heat the family took the rail trip thru Nebraska to Colorado. Stops were made at Evergreen and Colorado Springs. During the two years following her husband supplied the vacation pulpit at Springfield, and they occupied the Finkel and Nadal homes in successive years while renewing many old associations.

Compton

With the graduation of the children from High School, the way opened to return north thru a call to the Compton Hill church in St. Louis. This was five hundred miles nearer Oberlin where it was expected that the children would go to college, as their father and mother had done thirty years before.

They took a single house in South St. Louis about a mile from the church. It was large, with three floors and basement like many others, but between close brick walls and quite confined and dark as compared with their Texarkana home. There was hardly any yard at all, tho Eva made a planting of the peony roots which she had kept in all the family moves, and which her mother had brought to Nebraska from Iowa. They were finally given to a friend who had a place for them in Webster Groves.

The family circle was broken for the first time when Eugene went to Oberlin in September, 1928. Katherine remained at home and enrolled as a freshman in Washington University. Both children cooperated faithfully in the weekly letters which gave their mother a carefully kept record of their work and activities thru all the college years.

For many months after moving to St. Louis the family enjoyed frequent contacts with friends who stopped as they were passing thru — an experience they had missed when liv-

ing so far south of the usual lines of travel. Cousin Dorothy Deemer of Chadron, Nebraska, came often for week-ends while at Monticello Seminary near Alton, Illinois. Mary and her husband came for a visit, and Eva took pride in showing them the city of her recent home and the beauty of the adjacent Ozarks.

The summer of 1929 we made the auto trip to Oberlin, where Katherine entered in the fall. The big house was lonesome after the children were gone.

Our silver wedding was celebrated modestly in January with a cream and sugar set, and the Mothercraft class presented her with a tray and spoon. She had set aside the rule not to accept office in a church organization, and was made president of the Missionary Society. But the group was small, and she did not have the strength to do what she would. She was sought out by the PEO Sisterhood and became a member of Chapter O, thru which she found many friends. Possibly in the increasing inabilities there was a hint of the trouble impending. She had a severe run of "flu" in February, from which she recovered slowly.

Katherine came home in June and they went to visit Mary in Crete, Nebraska, where there was an unexpected reunion of the Davidsons — sister Laura's children. They came with their families from all over the west: Florence from California, Earl and Roy from Idaho, Robert Erastus from Washington, and Clarence and Irene from Nebraska. It was a providential gathering with these men and women, nephews and nieces whom she had known and cared for in the old home days.

PART VII

Conclusion

While on this visit, Dr. Boyden urged her to go for an examination immediately on her return home. At the Barnes Hospital her case was diagnosed as a form of leukemia, incurable, and her balance of life less than two years. She took the sentence standing up. There was no word of complaint or protest. Only once she said, "It's hard!" She wanted the church work to continue as usual, and hoped that we could carry on without interruption to the very end. It was her ideal to live every day at one's best, and ready for eternity. Her only concern was for those whom she must leave — especially Katherine, with whom she had been inseparably and mutually dependent.

So far as one might judge by her conduct, the shock of the diagnosis was harder for me than for her. For a time all life went out of focus. I made a trip to Nebraska to consult with Dr. Boyden as to those two short years. His judgment confirmed Eva's — that all should continue as usual, and Katherine return to college in the fall. For a person of less fortitude there might have been a period of wearisome invalidism.

In July she received an X-ray treatment and was very weak for some time, but gradually regained the strength that she had before. Every month there was a trip to the hospital for a blood test. In November another treatment did not interrupt the usual routine. One wonders what was passing in her mind in the experiences of that year. Outwardly she was poised and serene. Certain limitations of diet were not burdensome. Relief from heavier housework was easily arranged. Since the children were away we had moved into a

five-room flat in July. She went to church services, to Aid, to social meetings, and to PEO, as ever.

She set herself to make quilts and comforts for the children, which were wonderful creations of color and workmanship. To save her strength, the sewing machine which had served her well for twenty-five years was exchanged for one motor-driven. She was alone much of the day. One thinks now that it should not have been so. Evenings, when I could be at home, we played backgammon until we knew the moves by heart. With her usual thoroughness she bought a book, better to master the game.

We followed with interest the reading suggested by the PEO Chapter. "The Education of a Princess," by Grand Duchess Marie, and Byrd's "Little America" interested her greatly. "Flying with Lindbergh" (Keyhoe), for whom she shared the popular admiration, was easy reading which we enjoyed together.

Many hours were spent with the auto in the vicinity of the city. On Monday mornings the highways were pleasantly free from traffic, and we explored the by-ways. She loved the country, the hills, the trees, and the flowers.

After Katherine came home in the summer of 1931 we took rooms in the parsonage at Delavan, Wisconsin. It was an easy distance, driving thru Illinois. The outlook was across the simple green of a restful old town. There were beautiful drives about—to Beloit, Madison, Kenosha, Harvard, and around both lakes, Delavan and Geneva. The Yerkes Observatory was near. She never complained, and was so brave, so ready to cooperate, and to go anywhere within the limit of her strength, that I hoped the lease of life given her by the doctor had been extended. Eugene finished his college work in summer school and joined us for the trip home, after which there were several treasured weeks before the children went back.

The last four months were like the season before. She worked steadily on her quilts and comforts, and took part in the

usual activities, tho she asked to be relieved from the preparation of the Christmas cards which had usually been a pleasure. On Thanksgiving we went to a hotel, but it proved to be a cold place for a family holiday.

In December, after thirteen months of respite, she went to the hospital for a treatment, but it made no immediate change. She was home for the vacation with the children. She spent much time on the couch while Katherine did the work. As was our custom, she and Eugene prepared the tree on Christmas Eve while Katherine and I went with the carolers. After opening gifts in the morning we had a great Christmas dinner.

Eugene, now in Ohio State University, went back on Friday evening. Katherine returned to Oberlin on Monday. Eva waved her goodbye from the door. She told Mary afterward, "When I waved goodbye to Katherine I never expected to see her again." She went immediately to bed.

We were thankful that she was spared much pain those last weeks. Thru January she was at home with a nurse, increasingly weaker. Mary came to be with her, and Dr. Boyden for a visit. With some of the old enthusiasm she roused to show her quilts, but sank back exhausted. She was fast becoming unconscious, with her mind quite at rest. She had hoped to slip away thus quietly at home without the distress of hospital treatments, but it was not to be so.

The doctor encouraged us to believe that she could be brought back for some months. She was taken again to the hospital, where for five weeks there was a pitiful struggle thru which she bore herself gallantly. The revival after the transfusion was like a resurrection. The awakened hopes, the experience of coming back again to those of whom she had taken farewell, were weirdly intoxicating.

Mary returned home at the new promise of life. But the hopes faded soon, and Eva was compelled to go thru the experience of dying a second time.

One day she said wearily, "It's so long dying!" But it

was a marvelous spirit of fortitude with which she bore herself in those days of disintegration. She did not want the children called home. She did not believe in last words. She wanted Katherine to finish the semester examinations which were pending. But after she went to the hospital I weakened and called the children home for a week-end. Katherine dropped everything and came to stay. Eva joked with the doctors and nurses so much that the doctor on the floor the evening before asked, "Does that woman know how sick she is?" When told that she did, he said, "I never saw anything like it!"

She had been five weeks in the hospital. Her eyes were bright and her face serene, but she was too weak to think. Katherine and I were with her. The light from the window shone upon her face as she said in the familiar way, "Sweetest boy!" I gave the countersign, "Sweetest girl," and she smiled. Shortly after that she slipped into unconsciousness as into sleep.

About seven in the evening we left her with the nurse, hoping that we would see her in the morning; but at one-thirty the nurse phoned that she had gone. It was March 4, 1932.

Katherine was with us. Eugene came, and Mary. The church was filled for her on a Saturday afternoon. She had asked that friends should not send flowers, but give rather to the living and the needy. As she had requested, the organist played Handel's "Largo" and the "Londonderry Air," and the soloist sang "O Love that Wilt Not Let Me Go" and "Father in Heaven," by Briggs — a fitting testimony to her faith and manner of living.

Father in heaven, I kneel to Thee,
As dawns the morning's beauteous ray,
And ask that Thou wilt give me strength
For just this day.

However hard my task may be,
Help me, dear Lord, to pray
For help and comfort from above
For just this day.



"THE RIVER" — BELLERIVE PARK — ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
Bears all its sons away;
They fly, forgotten, as a dream
Dies at the opening day.
— I. Watts

Let me be faithful, Lord, today,—
Patient, and kind, and true.
Teach me the loving word to say,
The helpful deed to do.

Give me a happy heart, dear Lord,
To sing along the way,
And guide me with Thy loving hand
For just this day.

Just this one day, my Father!
I dare not ask for more.
We may not know the good or ill
The morrow has in store.

But I have faith to travel on
In my allotted way,
And know that Thou wilt give me strength
For just this day.*

Dr. J. T. Stocking of Pilgrim Church offered prayer. Superintendent C. C. Burger spoke of the value of life, closing with these words:

“Because she has lived, we know that she lives.”

Soon after she knew that life was to be so short, she suggested, as we sat at a favorite spot in Bellerive Park looking across the Mississippi, that her ashes be scattered on the river over against us. Her imagination was fascinated with the on-going river, like her own life, never resting, into the Unknown. She was one who had traveled far, always a pioneer, never to find rest. There was a note of pathos for one who had so passionately hoped for a home — a place to stay and to build about with things that were dear and beautiful. But the call to go was imperative. She was ready.

Eva was not a clinging vine. She was wife and mother in her own right and enterprise. Strangers were sometimes surprised and startled when, beyond her mildly retiring husband, they caught the flash of her eye. She lived for him and his work with unstinted devotion. The Church was always for her the first cause, and to it she gave whole-hearted devotion as unto God. She went without hesitation wherever the work called, and adjusted the home routine to changing con-

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ditions as readily and cheerfully as did the frontier women in their day.

She lived for her children, tirelessly, patiently, intelligently, and poured out her life for them as its most satisfactory exercise.

In the use of money and goods she was both miser and spendthrift. Nothing was ever wasted. With meticulous care she saved, she denied herself pleasures, she made her own clothes and did her own work when possible. She was desperately afraid of debt and planned for the future, fearful of poverty, like generations of thrifty ancestors. But with money in hand she went into the shops to buy that which was choice, even tho expensive. She preferred to be without rather than to have that which was cheap. When she had bought that which was excellent in quality and taste, she found joy in its possession and joy in its care. She had a knack of taking care of things. Articles about the house almost never wore out. With a nail, a bit of glue, a needle and thread and her skill, the old were made as good as new.

Her mind was of an aggressive intellectual type. She preferred the company and conversation of men. The intricacies of philosophy were congenial to her. Until she was introduced to modern critical and liberal thought she was inclined to skepticism, as her father had been. On the other hand she was deeply religious at heart, and loyal to the ideals of Christian life and service.

She shared the attitude of teetotalers against gambling, drink and tobacco. For tobacco she had a physical aversion. Her ancestry expressed itself in the admiration which she gave President Coolidge as the personification of her ideals.

Tho intellectual, her nature was passionately affectionate and keenly sensitive to the approval or disapproval of others, but her emotions were severely restrained lest she should appear foolish and sentimental. Her self-control was remarkable, whether suppressing or expressing social attitudes, meeting calmly sudden and difficult situations, or mastering a weaken-

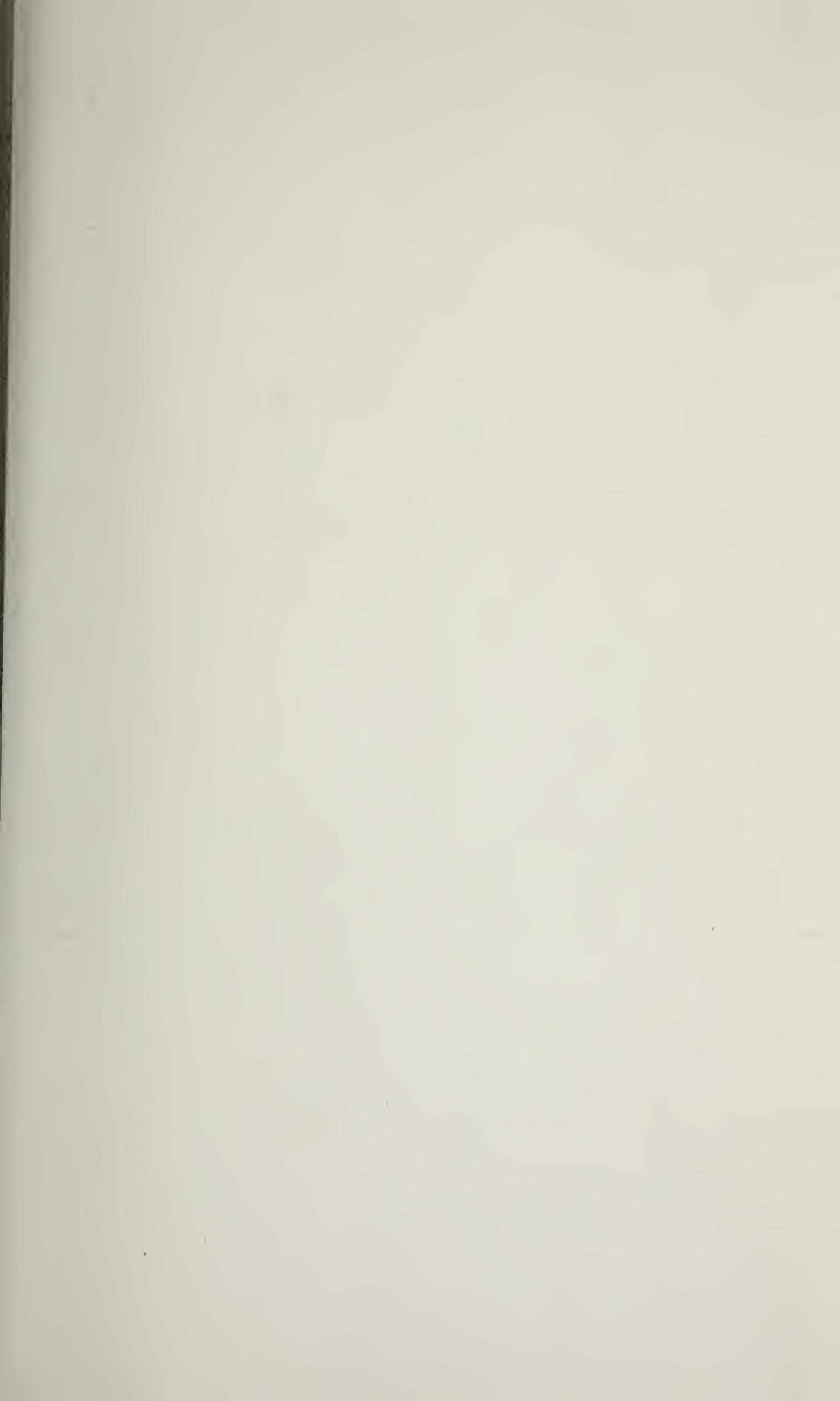
ing body. She was always cheerful and buoyant; she never fretted, whined, nagged, or blamed others. She never said, "I can't." If need be she said, "I won't," but she did not admit defeat. That which was to be done, she did. In Grand Island, when about to stage a play, it was discovered that the date selected had been taken. She sat up all night, rearranged the play, rewrote much of it, and brought it on a week earlier.

Long after she was gone there remained, posted over the kitchen sink where she could read it at her work, a clipping from a church bulletin of this selection from William Henry Channing:

My Symphony

To live content with small means;
To seek elegance rather than luxury, and refinement rather
than fashion;
To be worthy, not respectable; and wealthy, not rich;
To study hard, think quietly, talk gently, act frankly;
To listen to stars and birds, to babes and sages, with open heart;
To bear all cheerfully, do all bravely, await occasions, never
hurry;
In a word, to let the spiritual, unbidden and unconscious, grow
up thru the common —
This is to be my symphony!

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THE SHRUBBERY ABOUT 1900 Cut by Courtesy of Ravenna News



